

IN
DADDY JESSE'S
KINGDOM

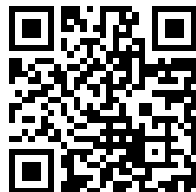


EDWARDS

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IN DADDY JESSE'S KINGDOM



ANN IDA

IN DADDY JESSE'S KINGDOM

By

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(MRS. HARRY STILLWELL EDWARDS)



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By
ROXILANE EDWARDS

PREFACE

The little stories gathered into this volume were in course of preparation for the press, when the beloved writer of them became, herself, a memory. The relation I bore to her may, naturally, be expected to color my estimate of them, but prior to the plan for reproduction in book form, I regarded them as almost wonderful in their appeal to the child mind and of distinct value as illustrating a phase of Southern life, the life of the child on the old plantation. Moreover they possess both folklore and historical interest. It was my assurance of this, that brought about their publication in the Macon Telegraph six years ago. Their reception by the public fully justifies the effort to place them in more enduring form.

The temptation is very strong to include in this preface, a memorial of the gentle woman whose spirit speaks from the written lines to all who knew her, but I shall defer this to an occasion in which commercialism will have no part. It may be proper to say here, that the stories were told to her children and grand children in nearly every instance without preparation and afterwards reproduced from memory in response to my urging; and that they constitute her own work in unchanged form. Also, that they did not gain in the writing, for the author of them was a strangely gifted raconteur. Listening, unnoticed, from a distance, I have marveled at the unbroken flow of language, the skillful selection of words for the child mind, the marshaling of related facts in orderly sequence, the play of fancy with the mysterious, and the quaint unerring climaxes.

With forty years experience with the pen, I know that never have I approached this facility, this genius. Nor have I ever brought to a human face and the soul rapture reflected in the faces of her childish audience.

Let the reader of these lines turn to "Daddy Jesse's Picture Show" for an example of the power of this story teller. The little boy's use of the word "too" was inspiration. I have never known one word to mean so much. In it is carried all his love and reverence for his own Mother, and in it the writer revealed her own.

The title of this collection is in deference to the wish of the author. Other titles were suggested, but her reply was, in each instance, "I want to perpetuate the name and memory of 'Daddy Jesse.' He was my mother's lifelong friend, and mine, and we loved him." In her mind she carried the long years of The Civil War when this man, a slave, governed her father's great plantation, directed more than two hundred slaves, protected the white families around him, and was true to every trust. And she remembered too, that in the long, long years of trial and poverty that followed the war this humble servitor, clung to the old home and never failed in word or in deed. So we have given his name to this book, with the tribute of the woman whose life touched his in many places and whose memory embalmed his love and devotion.

Mrs. Edwards passed away on August 5th, of this year. Her death was as quiet as her life. While talking to her children her eyes closed peacefully, the great heart ceased to beat and its beautiful guest departed on wings that gave back no echo.

For me, the closing of her eyes marked the passing of the Old South.

Harry Stillwell Edwards.

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CHRISTMAS AT GRANITE HILL

"Now, Me-mamma," said the Little Boy, settling himself in his Grandmother's lap, "you promised me if I would feed the chickens this morning, you'd tell me all about Christmas and where you were born. And I fed 'em and I fed 'em."

"I like that name 'Me-mamma'," said Grandmother, laughing and laying aside her knitting. "It seems to me better than 'Grandma,' and it's your own idea."

"But about Christmas, Me-mamma, and where you were born?"

"Well, tomorrow morning about 11 o'clock, if you will go out and look at the sun, it will be just about over Granite Hill, my Father's plantation, two miles beyond the town of Sparta, and there is where I was born. He called it by that name because of the quantity of granite all over the place. There was one large flat rock that covered several acres back of the house and in this rock was a hollow about as big as a circus ring, and many hours have I spent there, playing circus. There were many negroes on the place, and with plenty of little darkies to boss I had a right good circus company. My Father and Mother and visitors from the big house used to come down and laugh over our performances.

"Two little darkies named Tom and Jerry were my trained horses, and would do all sorts of funny tricks when I popped my whip. One darky was the elephant,

another the lion, another the bear, and there was a whole bunch of monkeys. A straggling pine stretched one long, low limb into our circus ring and on this my best performer, Ann Ida, gave her wonderful exhibition of bare-back riding.

"I am going to tell you a special story of Ann Ida some of these days. I tell you when we marched into the ring, blowing reeds, knocking bones, beating tin pans, there was some noise!"

"Did the elephants and tigers and bears blow reeds and knock bones, too, Me-mamma?"

"Yes," said Grandmother, laughing; "they were trained animals. When we tired of the circus we would go down farther and see the overseer make brandy for the soldiers who were off fighting in Virginia. Once he let Ann and me taste the drippings, and I am afraid we tasted some more when he wasn't looking, for when we started home we both fell down on the big rock and bumped our heads. Our screams brought everybody running, but they stopped and laughed when I told them the rock flew up and hit me in the face."

"Did it hurt much, Me-mamma?"

"Honey, the next time you go to Macon, you kneel down on Broadway and bump your head on the pavement. It's made from that same rock at Granite Hill. Yes, it hurts, as you'll find out."

"Did all the little darkies hang up their stockings Christmas? I don't see how Santa Claus could bring enough for all!"

"Everybody had to help in those days. There was no railroad to Sparta, but about a week before Christmas,

Jerry, Martin and Uncle Dick, our old drivers, would hitch up their teams and start for Augusta, their mules stepping along gaily as if they knew what it was all about, and the men blowing their bugles.

"Then how we children would watch and listen for their return! For we knew they were bringing apples, oranges, nuts and candy, and all sorts of good things to help Santa fill up fifty or sixty stockings. Bye and bye Ann Ida would put her hand to her ear and say: 'Hush! What's dat I heah?' And after awhile: 'Dat sho' is Unc' Dick's horn!' Ann Ida always heard it first. Then we'd hear Martin's and Jerry's, and even what they said.

"Well, the negroes all said they could understand what they meant—'presents for everybody who has been good—presents for the children who mind and don't tell stories!' Then, when, away down the lane, the wagons came in sight, what a scampering! It was a happy crowd that met them and came marching back, while the whips cracked and the bugles sang.

"The night before Christmas all the mothers on the plantation would come with their baskets and get the good things that Santa Claus had sent down from Augusta. Every little child's stocking must have an apple, an orange and plenty of candy in it. That was the rule. And they never failed to get them, for we loved our negroes and they loved us.

"There were not many toys in those days; and they were expensive. Old Morris, the fiddler, made the first doll I ever had. The negroes brought me all kinds of presents, strings of chinquepins, haws, popcorn, pet squirrels and tame coons. We saved all the eggs for a

week or two before Christmas, and such times as we children had hunting them, for there were hundreds of hens and guineas.

"On Christmas morning the bugle sounded again and here came the negroes, big and little, running from every direction into the broad backyard, swept hard and clean.

"Sometimes they came marching and singing their wonderfully beautiful old songs. Sometimes people would come from Sparta, and then the negroes would stand in the yard and sing for them other songs, the words and music of which were all their own.

"Then my father would come out on the roof of the porch with a little bag, and everybody got out of the way of the children, for every Christmas that bag held just ten dollars in silver dimes and five-cent pieces—there were no nickels in those days—and, standing up there, he scattered them like a man sowing grain.

"I wish you could have seen those little darkies dive and wriggle and stand on their heads. Father would laugh until he almost fell off the roof. Such happiness! I am afraid they don't get much at Christmas these times .

"Christmas night they had what they called fireworks—not the kind the children have now. They would build a great bonfire and play with balls made of cotton soaked in turpentine and set afire. The boys on College street, I hear, used to play the same way during the great war in this country.

"But the big frolic was the dance. A platform was built in the backyard and the dancers took their places there while we looked on from the porch and steps. It

was a treat to watch their happy faces and see the wonderful dancing. Old Morris could only play one tune, but he could play that all night, and just as well asleep as awake.

"Black Rhody was the brag dancer. I have never seen her equal, and I have seen the famous Russian dancers. Father always made her do a solo. He would go out and say: 'Rhody, I want you to show these people what dancing is. I think some of them really believe they know how to dance.' And he would take with him a full glass of water and balance it on Rhody's head and tell Morris to strike it up lively.

"Then Morris would rock away back and laugh and play 'Sally Good'n,' and Rhody would cut the 'pigeon wing,' 'knock Jim Crow,' and shuffle and whirl about, a smile stretched clear across her face and every tooth showing. Bimeby, she'd stop, lift the glass from her head and pour the water on the ground with all the airs of a princess."

"Me-mamma, I want to see Rhody dance!" said the Little Boy, earnestly.

"I'm afraid you'll never see her, my dear. She lives in Savannah and may never come up here again. Your Papa saw her once when he was little. An old black woman came in the yard on College street and, without saying a word, threw her arms around my Mother and then hugged me and laughed and cried. 'Child,' she said to me after awhile, 'is dis here your blessed boy?' And when I nodded, she hugged and kissed him till he yelled for help.

"The man who came with Rhody was her husband, and when she finished hugging us she said: 'Ole Miss, dis is my nigger. I come all de way up fum Savannah to ax you all to his face ef I ever had a whippin' in my life. Is I? Is I?'"

"'No,' said Mother, 'you were always a good girl. No one ever struck you.'

"'Thank God for dat!' shouted Rhody. 'Russell, you hear what Ole Miss tellin' you, don't you? Well, ef you ever lay de weight of yo' han' on me, yo' is er dead nigger!'"

"As she started on her way again, I called to her: 'Rhody, can you dance as you used to?'"

"'No, honey,' she said sadly; 'one foot is pretty soople, but de other has de rheumatiz tell dey don't match!'"

ANN IDA

Me-mamma put aside her knitting and drew the Little Boy up into her lap. She had once promised him the story of Ann Ida, and when anybody promised the Little Boy anything a responsibility was incurred that, sooner or later, must be recognized. And the sooner it was recognized the better for all parties concerned.

It was a story she did not know how to tell wisely, for it revealed a great deal of her own early history, and she was what many people in this age would call a bad child; that is, people who do not understand human nature and mother nature. For, when a mother has raised a number of children by rule, it sometimes happens that there comes along a little wee tot, and mother, having tired of the strain, and feeling, deep down, the eternal childhood calling, makes a sort of pet of the last little one, and lets her just grow up, finding a pleasure in even her willfulness.

Maybe she lacks companionship, and maybe she just trusts to loving the little one into the right path finally. And it's funny, but the youngest child is oftenest the best in many a family when grown up, or at least, as good as any.

How to tell the story without encouraging the Little Boy the wrong way, was the problem. The Little Boy needed no encouragement. But here is the story she told him:

"Ann Ida was the smallest child ever born at Granite Hill. She weighed a little less than two pounds, and was

just a handful. Her sisters had heard the white children recite the lines from Mother Goose:

‘I had a little husband,
No bigger than my thumb,
I put him in a coffee pot
And there I bade him drum,’

and one day they took little Ann Ida and put her in an old coffee pot to see if she would drum. They couldn’t get her out and hearing her mother, Aunt Liza, coming they ran off.

“When Aunt Liza saw that Ann Ida was missing, and nothing in the room but old Tom, the cat, she was scared almost to death, and started to kill him, but fortunately, just at that moment, Ann Ida began to squeal, and Tom’s life was saved.

“Ann Ida was three or four years younger than I, and was given to me the day she was born. We grew up together and were always together. When you saw one you saw the other. She was my shadow. We were parted at night whenever Ann Ida’s mother could find her, and take her over to the ‘quarters,’ as they called the place where the negroes lived; but she couldn’t always find her.

“One night I hid her in the garret, where she was to stay until I could get my supper, and slip some in my pocket for her.

“Well, we had just seated ourselves at the table when we heard an awful scream, and a fall. I ran up to the foot of the great steps as fast as I could, followed by the whole family. There lay poor little Ann Ida. She had

rolled down the steps in the dark, more scared than hurt.

"She was up in that dark garret waiting for me when the big old house cat came through the window, from the roof, and looked at her, his eyeballs like coals of fire. Ann Ida just dived down the steps, and yelled for me.

"One night I came near getting her seriously hurt. My hiding places had all been discovered, and it was getting to be hard to keep Ann Ida overnight, when I hit on the soiled clothes bag, which hung pretty high up in the closet of the children's room.

"By hard work I succeeded in getting Ann Ida in the bag as it hung, and cautioned her to keep quiet until the maid had gone, when I would come for her.

"It was not likely Aunt Eliza would look for her there. She had in times past, found her behind the sofa in the parlor; behind the pillows on the bed in the guests' room, and once, in the middle of my older brother's bed. But it was he who found her there first, and you may be sure he raised a row.

"Well, the night I hid her in the clothes bag, the maid was telling us a ghost story, and just at the point where we were all expecting the ghost to appear the string broke and down came poor Ann Ida with an awful bump.

"All the children fled from the room in a panic, all except me. I knew what the trouble was and went and dragged poor Ann Ida out where she could get some fresh air, for her breath was all knocked out of her."

"But didn't anybody whip you, Me-mamma? They would have whipped me, I know."

"No, they didn't whip me. My father was away in the war in those days and I was a very delicate child. My mother wouldn't let anyone touch me. Aunt Eliza.

the old nurse, used to threaten me, and I reckon there were times when I would have been spanked if I had happened to be in her house. But I was too wise to be bad away from our house. But Aunt Eliza, as I said, would often threaten. She would come in after supper and say:

“ ‘Whar ’s Ann Ida?’ and look at me. But, like Brer Rabbit, I’d lay low and say nothing. ‘Whar ’s Ann Ida?’ And she’d look at me hard. ‘Ain’t you gointer tell me whar dat nigger is? Never mind, I’m gointer whup you when I gits you down ter my house, I sho is!’

“ ‘I’m not coming down there any more,’ I’d say, ‘and you are afraid to hit me where mother is.’

“Then she would try coaxing. ‘Honey, ef you’ll tell me whar you done hid dat chile, Wess is gointer bring home a heap of store candy—striped candy—and apples and chinquepins, an’ you gointer git you’ share, you sho is!’

“Wess, her husband, was a negro who belonged to our neighbor, Mr. Edge Bird, and worked around the neighborhood mending and making shoes, and always brought something nice when he came home on Saturday. But I would shake my head. ‘Ann Ida will give me some of hers.’ ”

“But, Me-mamma, didn’t you have plenty of candy, anyway?”

“Not store candy, as we used to call the kind you buy. It was not the custom to buy it for children in my days. Sometimes a girl would come to school with one stick and suck on it all day while the others watched her.

"She would turn it around, first one end and then the other in her mouth, and if anyone asked her for a piece she would say, 'I would give you some, but I've done sucked it all over.'

"Store candy was a treat and Aunt Eliza knew it, but she could never make me give up Ann Ida with a promise of candy.

"One day after my Father had come home and when we were expecting Sherman's army at Granite Hill, my mother insisted that he should take all the mules, and horses, and cattle down to another plantation we had in Jefferson county to save them. She wanted Father out of the way, too, because he was a Confederate colonel, and although he had been wounded, and the bone was gone out of one arm, the Yankees would have carried him off and put him in prison until the war ended.

"Well, I concluded that I'd better be getting out of the way, too—with Ann Ida. I had heard so much of Sherman I thought of him as I did of tigers and sharks, and, that all Yankees had horns, if not tails.

"It seemed to me the time had come for Ann Ida and and me to be moving somewhere, so, when my father was about to start, Ann Ida and I made our appearance, equipped for flight.

"We had put on all the dresses, and underclothes we could, and had the balance tied up in bundles. Our dresses wouldn't button, and we were almost as broad as we were long. Looked like little barrels with a hoop bursted, I reckon.

"Everybody screamed when they saw us, and I reckon we did look funny.

"But we didn't leave, after all. When I found that my mother was going to remain behind I began to take off things and get back to my usual size. We didn't refugee that day."

"What's 'refugee,' Me-mamma?"

"It means a person who takes refuge somewhere, who runs away and hides.

"We got our chance later, for one night three Yankees came and knocked on our front door with their pistols, and when my mother opened it they came in and threatened to burn up everything if she didn't give them her money and jewelry.

"She stood with her back to her daughters' room—my older sisters—and would not let them enter. And how she did talk to those men! She called them cowards, and when they said they'd go out and burn the ginhouse, dared them to try it.

"Finally, they seemed to get ashamed of themselves and left. After awhile an officer came and told mother that he was afraid some of his men had been there and frightened her; but she said no, they hadn't frightened her; that it took more than three drunken Yankees to frighten a southern woman.

"The officer explained that there were always some men hard to control in every army, and was very nice about it. I didn't hear all of this myself. When those three men came in, and I saw their pistols, I said to Ann Ida, 'Ann Ida, the time to refugee has come!'

"We tumbled down the back steps, and simply flew to the quarters, and Aunt Eliza's house. We refuged

clear up under the bed and there they found us when the excitement was over."

"Is that all, Me-mamma?"

"Yes," said Me-mamma, laughing quietly, "that's all. But I started the story by telling you that Ann Ida was the smallest child ever born at Granite Hill, and now I'll end it by saying she was the tallest negro woman that ever grew up there. She was nearly six feet tall when she was married."

DADDY JESSE'S PICTURE SHOW

"Daddy Jesse, Me-mamma told me to ask you if you would like to go to the picture show with me? I am sure you would enjoy it," said the Little Boy in his precise way.

"Des somep'n else ter spen' money on: pu' waste o' money. I'd druther put mine in terbaccar."

"Why, Daddy Jesse, it only costs a dime!"

"Des er dime! Well, ev'y time you go to dem picture shows you gimme er dime, an' I'll put it away for you for Christmas, an' you'll see what hit teks ter go ter dem shows in er year! It sho counts up! I goes ter er picture show 'most ev'y night atter supper an' hit don't cost me nuthin'."

"But, there isn't any nearer than town. How can you go to a picture show every night?"

"What I tell you 'bout not knowin' ev'ything? My show don't cost nothin'!"

"Oh, Daddy Jesse, take me to one, please!"

"You don't have fur ter go, chile. Ternight atter supper you run down ter my house an' I'll tek you to er picture show what is er picture show, an' give you er front seat ter boot."

That night, the Little Boy could scarcely wait until he had finished his supper, he was so eager to see Daddy Jesse's picture show. He found the old man sitting on his little porch in his old rocking chair with a smaller chair for his little guest.

He did not notice that the window near at hand was up a little and that there was a queer box under the

sash. The old man pretended he was asleep and awoke with a start when he heard the patter of flying feet and the eager voice.

"All right, Daddy Jesse, I'm ready to start to the picture show!"

"Ain't nowhar ter start. You des set down dar in dat cheer an' de show'll open up when I gives de word. You want ter see de funny ones fust or des de pritty ones?"

"Oh! let's see the funny ones first!"

The sky was full of broken clouds with the bright moon stealing along behind them. The Little Boy sat by the old man and leaned against his knee, his eager face upturned as the other pointed:

"Look yonner! See dat little white cradle floatin' off by itse'f? Dar's sho somep'n in dat cradle, cause er white foot er han' is stickin' up!"

"Oh maybe its a baby and he's waking up. I'm afraid the cradle will turn over Daddy Jesse; it's twisting around awfully!"

"Hit won't turn over, honey. An' 'sides, all babies up dere has wings anyhow. Now look way over yonner!—must be er circus! Look at dat horse prancin' eroun' an' er lady stannin' up on 'im—"

"Oh, I see an elephant, Daddy Jesse, and a whole lot of little monkeys!"

"Oomhoo! An' what's dat way off yonner in er clear streak o' sky?"

"A sailboat—like those we saw at Tybee. O, look! Daddy Jesse, how fast it moves along! Now it's going right in among the islands; I wish I was on it!"

'I'm glad you ain't—an' all dat wind blowin'! Hit one o' dem islands in dat wind an' it's goodbye my honey, I'm gone!"

"Daddy Jesse, I see something that looks like the three Wise Men in my picture book! Do you reckon they are on their way to Bethlehem?"

"Sholy, cause out yonner ter one side is er lot er little white roun'-backed clouds what looks like sheep, an' two er three men stannin' guard an' lookin' up ter whar dat bright star is shinin'. It sholy mus' be de three Wise Men an' de shepherds."

"And Daddy Jesse, yonder is a beautiful angel with a long cloak trailing out behind, coming to tell them that Christ is born. O! I like your picture show, Daddy Jesse!"

And so, from picture to picture the eager mind leaped until the old man, who was wise in the ways of children began to fear troubled dreams for the little fellow when he was off to bed. He consulted his old silver watch gravely.

"Well," he said, "show is about over fer de night. Ain't no use ter crowd dis show. You can come down any time when de moon is shinin' an' de clouds lyin' eroun' an' see it goin' on.

"De good God made it all an' put de little stars up fer lights. You don't have ter shet yo'sef up in er close house an' breathe bad air ter see dis show—ner pay out yo' money ter nobody. I reckon hits de oldest show in de worl'. I reckon old man Adam mus' er took Cain and Abel on his knee when they was des little children, an' showed 'em de animals, too."

"But, Daddy Jesse, just look yonder! See the long path out of the sky and the people coming down; I know they must be angels!"

The Little Boy climbed into the old man's lap and pointed in his excitement.

"See, off to one side there is a whole lot of little angels playing on their harps! O, Daddy Jesse, listen! Don't you hear the music? It's like the wind in the trees—rising and falling. Listen, Daddy Jesse!"

The old man stole a glance at the box in his window—his wind harp made by stretching horse-hairs across a hole in it through which the wind blew.

"What you hears is de wind, chile—de wind risin' an' fallin' an' bein' de oldest music in de worl' it des natchully goes wid de oldes' picture show. Run erlong now; it's time you got in dat bed o' your'n."

"Listen, Daddy Jess! Singing—singing—"

"Yes, chile."

"Daddy Jesse, you remember that song they are practicing for Easter, 'Peace on earth, and good-will, and good-will'?"

"Oomhoo! sholy!"

"Daddy Jesse, that wasn't Jesus in the cradle up there, was it?"

"Mout er been!"

"No. He was born in a manger. He had no place to lay His head."

The Little Boy's own head was now against the old man's breast and his eyes were closing dreamily: "Sing-

ing, singing. He had no cradle—but His Mother—was there and—she could sing—to—Him—couldn't she, Daddy Jesse?—I'm glad—Jesus had—a—Mother, too!"

The old man looked down into the smiling face against his breast. The eyes had closed and on the lips was a smile. Rising, he bore him off to the house and very gently placed him in his mother's lap.

AN OLD STORY

"Don't pester me no more 'bout Brer Rabbit," said Daddy Jesse, "I'm des nachully tired o' de sound of 'es name. Anybody would think, to hear you talk, he was de onliest mighty man in de worl'. Ax me somep'n nigher home."

"But I can't think of anything nigher home."

"Listen! You hear dat guinea hen out yonner in de jimson weeds?"

"Yes."

"An' de dominicker hen cacklin' up in de hay loft?"

"Yes."

"An' de ole lady patridge whistlin' up yonner in de wheat?"

"Yes."

"Well, den!"

The Little Boy was silent as he sought the connection, the tiny frown between his eyes.

"Time was," continued the old man, "when all of 'em lived along tergether, for dey is close kin. Dey used ter come eroun' an' ramble in de gyarden an' hunt bugs, an' weed seed, an' it look' like dere was goin' ter be peace; but one day Ole Marster had de fence line run in er new place, an' whar de gate was, de big post lef' er hole in de groun'. Right den an' dar de trouble started.

"Des erbout ten o'clock ev'y day dar was er rookus out in de gyarden perfec'ly scandalous. An' de racket kep' up day in an' day out, tell one day Ole Miss ses ter me,

'Jesse, fer goodness sakes go out yonner an' see what ails dem fowls.' An' I went."

"What was the matter, Daddy Jesse?"

"Dar you go ergin! Gimme time, gimme time! As I was er sayin', I went out ter de gyarden an' dar was Ole Lady Hen wid her head up, shouten' at de top o' her voice, 'I did it! I did it!' An' Mis' Guinea Hen was screamin' back, 'My track! My track! My track!' An' Mis' Patridge was curvin' roun' wid her wings draggin', talkin' so fast ain't nobody knows what she did say"—

"But Daddy Jesse"—

"Gimme time. Ef I was ter start back an' tell de whole o' dis story I'd git back mighty nigh de fust end o' de worl'. Did you ever hear dat ole song:

'Mighty little house fer one will do,

'But dar never was er house big er'nuff
fer two?"

"No, Daddy Jesse. But about the fuss in the garden?"

"I'm right in de middle o' date fuss now, honey. Don't cut in on me no mo'. Put er passel o' wimmin folks in one house—sisters, an' sister-in-laws, an' daughter-in-laws, an' cousins an' fer er while sugar won't melt in dey moufs. But des let 'em marry off an' chillun come erlong an' hits goodbye, my honey, I'm gone."

"But, Daddy Jesse, what has that got to do with the fuss in the garden?"

"Chile, de fuss in de gyarden was de fuss in de house wid feathers on it. Same ole fuss.

"I went out dar 'cause Ole Miss sont me, but I knowed what was de matter when I started.

"De trouble was all three of 'em done laid in de same nes', which was de post hole, an' now all three of 'em was tryin' ter set at de same time.

"Fust an las' I reckon dar must o' been er peck o' eggs in dat hole. It tuk my hat wid de brim stannin' up ter git 'em ter de house atter I don fill up de hole. Sence den," continued the old man, "dars been peace in de fambly. 'Cause why? 'Cause Ole Lady Hen tuk up in de hay loft, an' Miss Guinea Hen tuk up out in de jimson weeds an' Miss Patridge moved hersef up ter de wheat field.

"Now dey talks fum er distance an' nobody 'sputes deir word an' dars peace in de lan'. Fact is dey mighty nigh put me ter sleep erbout dis time o' day, de peace is so heavy in de air.

"Same way wid dem sisters, an' sister-in-laws, an' daughter-in-laws, an' cousins I was tellin' you erbout. Let 'em des move out o' de same house—one ercross de street an' one up de street, an' one down de street des far ernough ter swap talk ercross de street or de fence, an' hits sho ernother worl'.

"Peace hangs heavy! Peace hangs heavy! Hits sister dis, an' cousin dat, fum sunup tell sundown.

"Mighty little house fer one will do,
But dar never was er house dat was big
er'nuff fer two."

LITTLE THINGS

"Daddy Jesse," asked the Little Boy, "what makes you cover up your fire every night? You promised to tell me once, and you never did."

"Well, for goodness sakes, don't you never fergit nothin'? I ain't got no time now to be tellin' you about fires. Yonder comes er rain an' dis here wood has got ter be took in de kitchen right erway."

"But, Daddy Jesse, if I help you carry it in will you tell me?"

"Well, dats er gray horse of ernother color. I reckon I'll have ter tell you 'bout dat fire ef you helps me tote de wood, so come erlong an' let's git busy."

In a little while the wood was all stored away for the cook, and Daddy Jesse was seated on the back steps with the Little Boy snuggled up against him, and "Old Miss" in her rocking chair smiling down on them from the porch.

"Well," said the old man, "long time ergo, when de war had des started, me an' old Marster put out fer de Jeffersonville plantation. It was er long ways, an' in dem days de roads was bad an' hit tuk er night an' er day.

"We mos' gener'ly put up o' nights wid er lady erlong de way by de name o' Mis' Brinson. Dat night, atter supper, Master set down by de fire an' struck er match fer ter light es pipe. Mis' Brinson grab es arm, but too late, an' say: 'Wilful waste makes awful want; you ought-

er use one er dem straws ter light yo' pipe. Dat's what dey is for.'

"Old Marster laughed, an' ses, ses he, 'What you gointer do ef de fire goes out?' 'De fire ain't goin' out,' ses Mis' Brinson; 'I covers de coals up o' nights, an' in de mornin' I rakes off de ashes an' lays some lightwood on 'em.'

"Right den an' dar, I makes up my mind I was gointer save my matches, which was scyarce anyhow, an' so rotten po' when you scratch one you could smell it all over de plantation. An' den Mis' Brinson tell us how she learned ter save little things.

" 'When I was er chile,' ses she 'we had two neighbors way back whar I come from, an' one was big rich an' one was pow'ful po'. De rich ooman had er feather bed, but de po' one had ter sleep on er shuck matruss. De rich one didn't know how ter save, ner how ter mend things, but de po' ooman had ter look atter de little things an' darn an' mend an' save.

" 'Dar was er hole in de rich ooman's matruss, an' ev'y day when she'd make up her bed some er de feathers would come out an' float erroun' an' settle on de flo' an' bienby be swep' out. De po' ooman would go out an' pick up de feathers, one by one, an' put 'em erway in er bag fer ter make her er feather bed, too, some day.

" 'Well, day in an' day out, dis went erlong, an' bienby de rich ooman's matruss done got so thin an' hard she couldn't res' o' nights, an' she come over ter de po' ooman an' ses ses she, "You sho'ly is got er nice feather bed. What's become er dat old shuck matruss you used ter sleep on?"

"An' de po' ooman say she done fed de ole matruss ter de cow. 'But ses de rich ooman,' 'whar you git so many feathers ter fill yo' matruss?'"

"An de po' ooman studied erwhile an' say,' 'I got all dem feathers fum one goose.'

" 'She mus' er been er mightly big goose.' ses de rich ooman. 'She was,' says de po' ooman laughin'.

"Dat all come fum savin' little things. You go up yonder an' ask yo' Me-mamma whar dat habit o' cov'rin' up de fire come fum an' she can tell you mo' erbout it in er minit den I can in er month."

And in a moment or two the Little Boy was in the old lady's lap much to Daddy Jesse's delight.

"It's almost too old a story for your little head," said Me-mamma, "and some of the words are strange, but maybe you will be interested enough to read all about it when you are a bigger boy.

"My grandmother came from a country called England, and the custom of covering up the fire at night was followed by everybody in the villages and farming sections. It was brought into England from another country called Normandy, and the town bell used to ring at nine o'clock every night as a signal for everybody to cover up their fires.

"The Norman people called this signal the 'couvre feu,' which means cover fire; and the English people called it the 'curfew,' which was the nearest they could come to it.

"But the fires were covered for two reasons. As people had no matches in those days it was important to preserve a spark for morning. This was one reason. The other was, having no fire departments and the houses

being all wood and close together, it was very necessary to guard against fires; and so, by law, everybody was required to cover their fires at nine o'clock so that the wind couldn't blow down the chimneys in the night and scatter the sparks."

"Live an' l'arn; live an' la'rn!" said Daddy Jesse. "Er man never gits too ole ter find out somep'n new. Yestiddy Mary Ann's little gal come over ter my house an' say her ma ses sen' her some fire, 'cause her'n was done all out.

" 'Well,' ses I, 'dar is de fire, but what you gointer tek it in?' An' den dat little nigger stoop down an' bresh er handful o' cold ashes in one hand wid de other an' den er live coal on top o' de ashes an' was gone on er run fer home.

" 'Live an' l'arn!' ses I den, an' live an l'arn ses I now! When you ain't got but er few coals lef' at night, den cover de few—cover de few!" And Daddy Jesse never knew why Me-mamma threw her head back and laughed.

BRER RABBIT AND MR. SQUIRREL

“De Raccoon’s tail am ringed all around,
De possum’s tail am bare;
Brer Rabbit he comes slipping along,
But he ain’t got none to spare.
De squirrel am a mighty man,
He totes er bushy tail,
He steals all my old marster’s corn,
An’ he hulls it on er rail.”

Daddy Jesse was hammering away on a heel he was adding to his Sunday shoe, keeping time to the song he was singing.

“Daddy Jesse, what are you singing?” laughed the Little Boy, looking on with his hands clasped behind his back after the fashion of his grandfather.

“Don’t you hear me? I was des settin here talkin’ out loud erbout some folks what one time was thick as peas in er pod an’ de nex’ minute pullin’ hair—des like you an’ yo’ little frien’ Bob, what comes over here now an’ then.”

“But we never do fight.”

“Mighty like it! An’ you sho does pout. But I’m here ter tell evybody yo’ is er pritty good boy engener’ly Whar was I?”

“Why, you weren’t anywhere, Daddy Jesse, but just thinking—”

"Tobesho, tobesho! Well, I was des thinkin' erbout somep'n what happened away back yonner befo' de fust war.

"Brer Rabbit an' Mr. Squirrel was cousins in dem days an' mighty lovin'. It was Cousin Bunny dis an' Cousin Bunny dat fum mornin' tell night. Well, one day Mr. Squirrel started out ter have er little home party fer essef an' close kin. Brer Rabbit he hear erbout it fum er woodpecker talkin' ter er jaybird, an' immejitly he loped off ter find out why his name ain't in de pot.

"Warn't nothin' fer Mr. Squirrel ter do but to tell him 'come an' welcome,' but all de same he was powerful put out over Brer Rabbit's shovin' hissef in dat erway.

"Howsomever, he spread his supper an' here come Brer Rabbit lopin' in, an' set down, high up de table, wid his mustache trimblin'; 'cause he sho was hongry.

"Den he looked an' he looked an' he looked. Dar was hic'y nuts, pecan nuts, walnuts, scalybarks, chinkypins an' acorns—piles an' piles ov'em. Dey fill ev'ybody's plate an' give Brer Rabbit er extra share.

"Brer Rabbit tuk er pecan in es mouf an' wallop'd it eround, an' er acorn an' wallop'd it eroun' an' den he wrestled wid er scalybark. Ain't nobody peared ter be seein' him, but de whole bunch wuz laughin' fit ter kill deysef.

"Bimeby, Brer Rabbit git up an' 'lowed as how hit wuz er long ways back home an' he mus' be movin'. An' 'thank you fer de nice supper,' an' he had done 'had de time o' his life.'

"I hear some white folks talk de same way mo'n once. But Brer Rabbit sho was hot, an' when he peeped thoo

er crack an' seed all dem squirrels holdin' dey sides an' laughin' wid de back o' de han' ercross de mouf, he got hotter.

"De minute old Mis' Rabbit seen him come in de do' she knowed somep'n was de matter 'cause he sho had on es fightin' clothes. Den he up an' tells her he been insulted an' he was gointer git even or bus' er trace an' he was countin' on her ter help him.

"So old Mis' Rabbit she jined in an' hepped him right erlong, an' pritty soon dey was laughin' desefts in er good humor ergin.

"Well, sah, Brer Rabbit sont out 'es invites ter all 'es fambly ter come an' break bread wid him one mo' time, an' meet er ole friend of his'n, what was kinder kin, too. An' here dey come, fer er dinner bell carries whar er church bell won't reach.

"An' de speschul frien' was Mr. Squirrel. Well, sah, Mr. Squirrel was put high up de table in plain sight o' evybody an' his plate hepped up wid collards an' cabbage, an' turnip salad, an' lettice an' green pease in de pod.

"An' den evybody fell ter eatin' an' laughin' an' talkin', but dey wuz all watchin' Mr. Squirrel out o' de corner o' de eye. Mr. Squirrel he'd take er piece o' lettice an' rip it wid es bottom toofts an' drap it. An' he'd take er collard an' rip it an' drap it. An' so on down to bottom o' plate.

"Dere wuz fire in 'es eye an' green ooze in de corner of 'es mouf. Bout dat time he catch sight o' Brer Rabbit winkin' one eye an' de nex' minute he lit on him.

"Gemplemens, dat was sho some fight! When hit started, Brer Rabbit had fine little mouse ears an' proud-

er of 'em dan er boy wid 'es fust knife. An' Mr. Squirrel had er little mouse tail, but silky all over.

"When de fight was done, Brer Rabbit's ears done been pulled out ter whar you see 'em now, an' Mr. Squirrel's tail done been stretched so long an' tight it flies back over 'es head evy time he barks. An' dar you is."

"Is that how the rabbit got his long ears and the squirrel his bushy tail, Daddy Jesse?"

"So dey say. But hit wuz er mighty bad day fer 'em bofe, 'cause now when Mr. Man goes out huntin' he shoots des de minute he sees er big ear movin' in de bushes, or er tail jerkin' up in er tree.

"Brer Rabbit done think so long erbout 'es ugly ears he can't keep 'em still; an' Mr. Squirrel done mourn 'es funny tail so much it bobs evytime he opens' es mouf.

"Dat fight twix Brer Rabbit an' Mr. Squirrel done cost er million lives all ready an' I reckon it'll cost er million mo' befo' folks quit shootin' guns."

"But, Daddy Jesse, how could pullin' one rabbit's ears and and one squirrel's tail—"

Daddy Jesse arose suddenly and went to the door. "Yes'm," he shouted, "he's down here!" He paused a moment and added: "Yes'm I'll send 'im right erlong. Scoot fer de house!" he said to the Little Boy, "dey wants you up dere!" The Little Boy scooted.

"Ain't you ashamed to tell such a lie?" said Cindy, within the cabin. "He's too good er boy fer you ter fool like that. You know nobody warn't callin' him."

"Warn't no lie passed," said Daddy Jesse indignantly. "I des said dey wanted him up dere. I did'n want him down here. He was erbout ter put me in er hole."

DADDY JESSE'S GOOSE STORY

One warm day in June the Little Boy came running as fast as he could up the steep hill in front of the house.

"Oh! I'm so tired I can hardly breathe!" he said to Daddy Jesse, who was working around the roses in the front yard.

"Well, what fer?" asked the old man. "Didn't you know no better?"

"Well, Daddy Jesse, Mamma called me and as I couldn't make her hear me I thought I better hurry."

The old man rested on his trowel. "You sho is improvin', if you is givin' de fac's in de case. Tell de troof an shame de devil!—didn't you sorter think your ma had some of dat streaked an' striked candy lef over fum de party, or sum cake wid reesins in it?"

The Little Boy was silent as he considered. Daddy Jesse smiled slyly: "Anyhow, des 'member, yo' ma don't want you to use up yo' breath any sech way, 'cause it sho shortens yo' days. I learnt better years an' years ago, an' fum er goose!"

"Tell me about it Uncle Jesse please!" The old man shook his head:

"Don't let yo' hurry stop, now, tell you see what yo' ma wants. I seed Willis hitchin' up an' I specks she's gointer take you 'long ter town. Ef yo' minds yo' ma an' don't go wantin' ev'ything you see in town' an' learn all yo' lessons in time, ax yo' ma ter let you come down ter my house an' hear me tell what I learnt fum ole Mis' Goose."

The Little Boy mastered his lessons in a hurry and soon after supper reached the old negro's cabin, anxious to find out how a goose could teach anybody anything. He had always thought the geese very foolish. Daddy Jesse was putting finishing touches to a straw broom he had made.

"Is you done learnt dem less'ns?" asked the old man.

"Yes, Daddy Jesse, they were not hard."

"Well, dat's de fus' time I hear you say so. What did you come eroun' fer dis time? I seem ter disremember."

"About the goose—the old goose that taught you—"

"To be sho! to be sho!" said Daddy Jesse, scratching his head and studying hard. "Is you gointer keep still and lemme do de talkin'?"

"Yes, Daddy Jesse."

"Well, ter begin—de great gran'ma an' de great gran'pa of dat ole goose an' gander up yonder in de back yard was de ones learnt me de big lesson. I ain't never ter fergit it. One day, when I was a little boy des erbout as big as you is—"

"But Daddy Jesse our geese don't seem to have a bit of sense. I have seen them walk up and down the fence for an hour looking for a place to get out and all they had to do was to just flop their wings and be over the fence in a minute."

"Dat's de troof; dey des waits fer somebody ter come erlong an' say 'shoo!' All de same, dey can learn you somep'n ef you watch."

"And, Daddy Jesse they don't know an egg from a piece of broken china; for Mama made me take the eggs

out of their nest and put an old broken cup in place of them. They didn't know the difference."

"Dat's all you know 'bout it! 'Couse dey knowed de diffunce! But what was de use o' fussin'? Ole Mis' Goose knowed ef 'dem eggs was lef' whar she put 'em, some ole cur dog would sholy come erlong an' eat 'em up, or mebbe a varmint fum de woods."

"What's a varmint, Daddy Jesse?"

"Polecats, possums, coons and minxes, is de mos' insistin' of de varmint family."

"But as I was er sayin', ole Mis' Goose an' ole Mister Gander put dey heads tergether an' talk' de situashun over. I reckon you seen 'em many er times—firs' one stick a head out an' den ernother an' wiggle de tail. Voice talks an' voice talks back—"

"But Daddy Jesse, if they are talking why can't I understand them?"

"Cause it ain't sot down in no book. One ses to the yuther, ses she, 'she takes 'em fer fear dey might crack! crack! crack!' an' de yuther ses, he, 'she'll bring 'em back! back! back!' An' you watch close an' you gointer see dat ole gander 'scort Mis' Goose ter de nes' an' stan' eround somewhar an' watch tell she comes off."

"But, Daddy Jesse—"

"Don't 'but' me no mo' chile! Is we here ter argufy er pint er is I tellin' er story? I'm axin' yer!"

"You were going to tell me—"

"Den lemme tell yer! As I was er sayin', one day yo' gran'ma ses ter me, 'Jesse, go on down ter de foot o' de hill an' see ef dat ole goose is done hatch yet, an' ef so, bring her an' de little goslings along up ter de house,

'cause I'm erfraid de tarrepins might bite dey toes off in de water.'

"'Yes 'm,' ses I, an' I went on fas' as I could. An' I 'spected ter come erlong back des as fas'; but la! honey, ole Mis' Goose done hatch six little yaller goslings, de pritties' you ever see. I was in de bigges' kind o' hurry, 'cause some o' de boys was playin' marbles back o' de barn.

"I done my best, but dat ole goose warn't in de same hurry, she wouldn't hurry one bit. An' when I try ter move her 'long fast, de ole gander jump on me an' try ter beat me ter death. My legs sho' was sore nex' day.

"Well, dey come erlong, but de whole fambly des took dey own time. Dey put ev'y foot down flat an' when I foun' dar warn't no hurryin' de bunch I des put my foot down flat too an' sorter loafed along ter de top o' dat hill.

"Honey, when I got ter de top o' dat steep hill I felt like I'd been walkin' on level groun' all de way. I knowed right den an' dar dat de ole geese had more sense dan me.

"Dat was mor'n forty years ergo, an' I ain't been in no hurry sence. De good God gives er man des so many breaths ter breathe, an' dat's ter las' him all 'es life—de whole three score years an' ten, like de Book ses; but ef you ain't got no mo' sense dan ter use 'em up runnin' up hill, den yo' days will sholy be short an' de last of 'em be spent pantin' fer los' breath. Goodness, I spec' you used up er whole month's breath on dat hill terday!

"No, siree! Don't yer bleeve er goose ain't got sense! I hear tell dat er way back yonder, mebbe' fore yo' gran'ma was born, some ole goose made so much fuss one

night when de raiders was eroun' dey waked up de soldiers an' saved er whole town."

"What town, Daddy Jesse?"

"I disremember, perzacly. It mout er been Augusta and it mout er been Burningham. Better git yo' ma er somebody ter look it up. Now you run erlong. I got de crimps en bofe legs projeckin' roun' dem bushes terday an' I sholy would be proud ter stretch 'em er little on de bed."

BOSS

"Daddy Jess, why does Auntie keep the five gray chickens in a box and let all the other run out with their mother?"

The Little Boy's forehead was clouded and his usually placid face wore a worried look. The old man, who was sweeping the backyard, paused in his labor and laughed softly.

"De complexion of dem chickens I reckon don't suit dat ol' hen. Dey look too much like er gray hen she warn't on frien'ly terms wid, so she des slap deir jaws an' turned 'em out ter scratch fer deyself.

"Your Auntie knowed it warn't right ter treat 'em datway, 'cause dey couldn't help bein' born gray, so she des tuk 'em ter raise by han'.

"Funny how one thing starts ernother," and the old man looked off in the distance and scratched the bald spot on his head. I'd plum fergot erbout dat chicken. Here I was talkin' erbout dem five gray chickens an' bless goodness ernother gray chicken way back yonder popped in my head—"

"Oh, Daddy Jesse, tell me about the other gray chicken, please!"

"Gimme time! gimme time! Ain't you seed I was des erbout ter come up on de blind side o' dat story?"

"Honey, er nigger is like er rabbit. He'd druther go thoo er crack in a fence any day dan er gate. Always look fer him whar yo' don't expect him, an'—"

"But about the other gray chicken—"

"Well," said the old man, with a sigh, "yo' Me-mamma tuk off er white hen oncs what had done hatched er whole nest o' little white chickens—all but one, an' dat was gray, des like dem five what started dis trouble.

"De ol' hen make up her mind on de spot dat she ain't gointer scratch fer no mulatter in her fambly, so she pecked it an' flung it out o' de nes'.

"Yo' Me-mamma tuk him an' greased es head. Ev'y-body was sorry fer dat po' little orphun, an' it warn't long befo' it was de bes' grown chicken in de yard.

"It done got so big an' sassy yo' Me-mamma named it 'Boss.' Well, when Boss done got growed up ain't nobody knowed yet whether he was er rooster or she was er hen, 'cause while she had er long tail he had er high comb, too.

"Little Marster he bet on de rooster, an' yo' Me-mamma bet on de hen. 'Well,' ses little Marster, 'de firs' time he crows you mus' pay me five dollars.' 'An', ses yo' Me-mamma, 'de firs' time she lays er egg yo' mus' pay me five dollars.' We all des set back an' watch de game—"

"Daddy Jes, was it a hen?"

"Gimme time! gimme time! I was des comin' ter dat. One day yo' Me-mamma lef' her Sunday hat on de back po'ch er while, an' befo' she knowed it dat chicken done laid er egg right in it.

"Yo' Me-mamma clapped her han's an' call all de fambly to see de proof. 'Gimme dat five dollars,' ses she to little Marster. 'Boss done laid er egg;'"

"Did he give her the five dollars, Daddy Jesse?"

"No, honey; 'cause des erbout dat time Boss, 'stid o' cacklin', rared back an' crowed. Little Marster claim dat dey des owed each other five dollars, an' as fer him, he was willin' ter call it square. He took 'es stan' an' nothin' could move him.

" 'But,' ses he 'I'm willin' ter say she is mo' like er hen dan er rooster, des as er gurl is more like er' oman dan er man, an' tries ter boss ev'ything in the yard.'

"But lemme tell you, chile, dat was er good little chicken, hen or rooster. It used ter tek care o' all de little orphun chickens in de yard, an' scratch fer 'em day in an' day out.

"Little Marster had er time teasin' yo' Me-mamma erbout dat chicken. 'Why don' yo' teach him ter lay in de kettle,' ses he, 'whar de egg will be ready fer cookin'?'

" 'It's er bad sign ter crow in de house,' ses she, an' went off, whistlin'. Little Marster laughed an' called out,

'Er whistlin' 'oman an' er crowin' hen

Never comes ter no good en'."

"Where else did she lay, Daddy Jesse?"

"In de parlor, an' de pantry, an'—but run erlong, run erlong! Yonner comes Ol' Miss an' you gointer git me in er peck o' trouble."

The old man raised such a dust the Little Boy was obliged to leave him.

THE WISDOM OF BRER RABBIT

"La! la! la!" said Daddy Jesse, looking from his cabin window and seeing a few bolls of cotton beginning to open. "Dis nigger is sho got to hurry up an' git dese here baskets done. Fus thing you know dey's gointer be runnin' down here fur 'em.

"Ole Marster brung a new fangle' thing fum town what you stick in de groun' an' hang er bag on, but ain't nothin' gointer take de place of de white oak basket.

"What in de name o' goodness dey gointer do in er few mo' years when de oak timber gives out, I dunno. Dey is sholy cuttin' out de white oak scand'lous.

"What wid de railroad crossties an' de barrel fact'ry dey ain't gointer be none lef' in er few mo' years. Den what? I sees you hidin' 'hind dat tree. What you tryin' ter do? Skeer somebody?"

"Daddy Jesse," said the Little Boy, "I just hid to see who you were talking to."

"Is yo' done foun' out? Is yo' seed anybody roun' here but me?"

"No, Daddy Jesse."

"Well, I was des talkin' to merself, an' dat's better comp'ny dan er passel o' no-mannered niggers. Look here, boy, why ain't you off ter school? Does yo' Ma know you is dodgin' roun' de place dis erway? You don't tell me you got holiday ergin?"

"Yes, we have today for a picnic, and Me-mamma told me I could stay home, if I'd rather, and get you to

tell me about the rabbit and the scarecrow I'd rather hear you talk any day than go to a picnic and get redbugs on me."

The old man reflected a moment, a smile on his face. "I reckon yo' is tryin' yo' han' at praisin' an' doin' de bes' you know how. But what you gointer do when I done use up all dem stories?"

"I'll be mighty sorry."

"Well, dis speshul rabbit was de quicke' an' de smartes' rabbit I ever knowed—"

"Did you know him, Daddy Jesse?"

"Tobesho! You rec'on I'm gointer talk erbout some-thin' I don't know nothin' erbout? Course I knowed him. I got ter see er thing 'fo' I puts it out as er gospel fac'.

"Does yo' know whar Aunt Berry's patch is?" The Little Boy nodded eagerly. "Well, dar's whar dis rabbit tuk up. Aunt Berry sho did love dem ole bluestem col-lards of hern, an' so did Brer Rabbit, too.

"While Aunt Berry was ersleep Brer Rabbit would steal in dat patch an' fill up on greens; an' Brer Rabbit was mighty nigh as good er eater as Aunt Berry hersef.

"Betwix' de two dey was cuttin' er mighty wide row in dat patch, an' Brer Rabbit was gittin' mo'n his sheer, consid'rin' he ain't done none o' de plantin' ner hoein'. He'd slip in of er night an' be gone befo' Aunt Berry git dar in de mornin', leavin' no pay ceptin' er lot o' tracks. Aunt Berry she studied erwhile, an' den make up her mind ter take some o' her ol' clothes an' some sticks an' boxes an' fix her up er skeercrow. Den she got Jerry ter help her take it down ter de patch an' set it

up. When dey got done, an' put er ole hat on it, Jerry stan' off an' say, 'Hit sho does look des like yo', Aunt Berry,' an' she say, 'I reckon dat rabbit 'll stay outer my collards now.' Well, nex' day Brer Rabbit had done overslep' hissef an' got ter de patch des in time ter see Jerry comin' wid es gun. He was so skeered he was mos' distracted, an' looked eroun' fer some place ter go, 'cause Jerry was twixt him an' de crack in de fence he come thoo, an' when he was er lookin' he see what look like Aunt Berry stannin' off ter one side, an' he make up es mind den an' dar dat, as betwixt Jerry's gun an' Aunt Berry, give him Aunt Berry.

"Wid dat he dived under Aunt Berry's dress an' sot down ter look eroun'. Bless yo' soul! when he foun' dat Aunt Berry warn't unner dar wid 'im, but nothin' but er lot o' boxes an' sticks wid some clothes on 'em, he was er happy ole cotton tail.

"He clomb an' he clomb tell he was way up off de groun' in de top box wid es eye ter er hole an' ear cocked up, an' laughed essef mos' sick ter see Jerry lookin' unner de collards fer 'im.

"Bimeby, Jerry trot erlong back home an' tell Aunt Berry he done seed Brer Rabbit, but he des natchully melted out o' sight befo' es eyes like er graveyard hant, an' he sho didn't like de looks o' things.

"Nex' mornin' 'bout de break o' day, Aunt Berry woke up Jerry an' say she gointer see fer herself erbout Brer Rabbit. Well, sah, when dey git ter de gyarden dar was Brer Rabbit des er helpin' hissef ter collards, as big as life. Jerry raise es gun, but bless goodness befo' he got aim Brer Rabbit done melt out er sight ergin. Jerry

look at Aunt Berry, an' Aunt Berry say, 'Nev' mind, yo' go tell Calvin ter sen' me ole Tige termorrer, an' we'll see ef we can't fool dis mighty man.'

"Ole Tige was de bes' rabbit dog on de place, an' things look mighty bad fer Brer Rabbit nex' day when Aunt Berry an' Jerry an' de dog broke in on him at breakfas'.

"Aunt Berry had done put de pot on befo' she lef' de house an' as she come erlong had passed de time o' day wid Cindy an' tol' 'er ter come up an' take er rabbit stew wid 'er erbout twelve, she was so sho she was gittin' Brer Rabbit in er cornder.

"Aunt Berry seed 'im fust. 'Dar he is!' she shouted ter Jerry, an' den, 'Sick 'im, Tige!' But befo' you could say 'Scat!' dat rabbit was done melted out o' sight. Ole Tige he run dis way, an' he run dat way, an' trail an' bark, but it didn't bring 'im nowhar, 'cause dar was tracks an' fresh tracks all over de gyarden, fer Brer Rabbit was er lib'ral feeder.

"Bimeby Tige come ter de skeercrow, an' sot down an' howl, an' dis was too much fer Jerry. He let down his hammers an' shook es head, an' Aunt Berry look seeyus too. Wid dat dey call off de dog an' went erlong back home, passin' de word ter Cindy ter take off her yaller dress an' stay home.

"Brer Rabbit come out den an' eat esef mos' sick, an' went off home an' got es wife ter come an' board wid 'im erwhile.

"An' dey stayed, an' dar dey was nex' Easter when Little Miss, who had done heard erbout de hant, come in one day wid er baskit full o' de prettiest little rabbits you

ever seen, some wid pink ribbons tied roun' deir necks, an' some wid blue, what she had done foun' up in de top box o' dat ole skeercrow—"

"Did the mother rabbit tie the ribbons on them, Daddy Jesse?"

"I spek she got Little Miss ter do de tyin'——"

"What did they do with the little rabbits, Daddy Jesse?"

"Well atter all de chillun had looked 'em over an combed an' breshed deir hair, an' give 'em dinner, Little Miss took 'em back an' put 'em up in de top box unner de ole skeercrow, an' ole Miss Rabbit was sho glad ter git 'em home ergin.

"Nobody ever did tell Aunt Berry ner Jerry erbout 'em. Jerry might have slipped down der ergin wid es gun. Mos' ev'y nigger is mean atter you fool 'im."

THE JACK O' LANTERN

Daddy Jesse was putting a half-sole on one of his shoes when the Little Boy reached the cabin. He turned and twisted the leather across his knee and fitted it to the shoe, which was held by a strap upside down, and began to put in the pegs.

It was an operation the Little Boy had witnessed many a time, but never tired of. The real object of his visit quite disappeared from his mind as he stood looking on, but presently it came back with a rush.

"Daddy Jesse, what is a jack o' lantern? I asked Me-mamma, but she only laughed and told me to ask you."

The old man's face filled slowly with the wrinkles of silent laughter, but he made no reply and the Little Boy continued:

"Is there any such thing, Daddy Jesse? Cindy says she saw one the other night and it led her right into a briar patch."

"To be sho' dar is jack o' mer lantern. Whar did Cindy say she seen her'n?"

"Cindy says it came right out of the old negro cemetery up yonder in the graveyard cut."

The old man began a song, keeping time with his hammer on the shoe:

"Ole Darby is dead an' lies in his bed,
Oomhoo, lies in his bed;

Crabapple tree grows at his head,
Oomhoo, at his head.
Crabapples are ripe an' ready to fall;
Oomhoo, ready to fall.
Ole ooman come out to gyather 'em all,
Oomhoo, gyather 'em all.

"Ole Darby riz up an' give er a kick,
Oomhoo, give 'er a kick.
Ole ooman went off cheehockety hick,
Oomhoo, hockety hick.
Bridle and saddle lays on de top shelf,
Oomhoo, on de top shelf.
Ef yo' want any mo' you mus' sing it yo' self,
Oomhoo, sing it yo' self!"

The Little Boy laughed, but, as usual, stuck to the main point. "Please, Daddy Jesse, tell me about the jack o' lantern."

"I'm tellin' yo' chile! Don't you hear me say 'ole Darby'? Well, de story starts right dar. You go up yunner to dat ole buryin' groun' what ain't been used sence de war an' is all growed up wid trees an' bushes, an' you'll see on one o' dem little marble headboards de name o' Jim Darby. An' ef you don't mind, you'll step down in er grave what's been caved in goin' on fifty years or mo'.

"I ain't sayin' it fer fac', but I hear tell dat de jack o' mer lantern is de devil's lantern an' he uses it o' nights ter look up bad chillen; an' de onliest way he can git outer

de groun' is through er hole, an' he natchully takes to de places whar he been befo' to fetch bad men to feed his fire."

The Little Boy shivered and dropped to the floor, getting close to the old man, a fact that pleased him mightily.

"Was Darby bad, Daddy Jesse?"

"De wust in de worl', dey use to tell me. He was plumb gone 'fo I got here. I was up yonner by de barn one night when yo' pa was er little boy' an' yo' aunty was des er little curly head chile, an dar was er whole passel o' chillen out fum town stayin' over, when I hear somebody holler, 'jack o' mer lantern!' An' sho nuff er jack o' mer lantern started out of de ole buryin' groun' er zig-zaggin' ercross de fiel'.

"De whole passel o' chillen made er rush up to see it close, an' Ole Miss holler ter me ter go erlong an' look atter dem. Well, I trotted erlong behind in not much of no hurry, 'cause I already knowed what er jack o' mer lantern look like an' whar it come fum, an' dat was ernuff widout knowin' whar it was gwine——"

"What do they look like, Daddy Jesse?"

"Mos'ly like dese here little circus balloons what de man totes eroun' de street—sometimes red an' sometimes green, an' den ergin sometimes punkin yaller—or mebbe er ball o' fire."

"Did the children catch it, Daddy Jesse?"

"Dey sholy didn't. All of er sudd'n, whoever was totin' dat lantern turn an' come right atter our crowd, an' lemme tell yer dat was er foot race.

"I hear Ole Marster say once dat er straight line was der shortest road ter anywhar, an' when I look back an' see de light in dis here cabin whar me an' Daphne had des started keepin' house, I knowed home was de place fer me.

"I went in dis here do' so hard I run plumb over Daphne an' her iunin' board an' rolled up unner de bed. An' right dar I stayed all night, 'cause dar was er mock orange an' locus hedge twix' here an' de buryin' groun' in dem days, an' I lef' mos' all o' my clothes in it when I come thoo dat night. I lef' er lot o' skin, too."

"Did the children get away from the lantern, too?" asked the Little Boy when he had stopped laughing.

"I reckon dey did, honey. I didn't miss none of 'em nex' day. I hear tell as how dey went back, an' follered de lantern erway up in de woods, an' erbout de time dey was mos' cotch up—blip! an' out it went. An' right whar it went out was er stump hole erbout six foot deep.

"La! la! la! here I is talkin' an' talkin', an' it's gittin' too dark ter see ter drive er peg! Honey, yo' sho busted dis job fer terday!"

The Little Boy looked around into the shadows and gathering dusk without, and, with a catch in his breath, said:

"Well, I reckon Mamma is lookin' for me," and ran off home. Daddy Jesse laughed softly and went on with his job.

JANUARY

"What are you laughing at, Daddy Jesse?" asked the Little Boy, coming to where the old man was resting on his little porch at the close of the day, his head tipped back in the white oak rocker.

"I dunno perzac'ly. I spec' I was des sittin' here ruminatin' erbout de fus circus I ever got to—way back yonder when I was er boy."

"Oh! Daddy Jesse!"

"Oomhoo, 'course I'm gointer tell you 'bout it, now I done start de trouble. I reckon hit must er been nigh onter fifty years ergo when ole Marster ses ter me, 'Jesse, John Robinson's circus will be in Sparta termorrer an' I want you ter drive me up wid de chillun'."

"Lord! Lord! how dis nigger did work de res' o' dat day! In de mornin' Ole Marster step to de door an' call, 'Is you ready, Jesse?' 'Yessir,' ses I; 'I been ready all night!'"

"An' wid dat I druv de carriage roun' to de front door in er hurry, for I done hear tell dat de circus was already in Sparta, comin' ercross fum Milledgeville. De circus in dem days didn't travel on no railroad train. Hit took de big road an' stretched out er mile wid de wagons an' cages an' led horses an' elephunts, an' when er wagon got stuck de elephunts would pull it out in er hurry."

"Chile, when I got unner dat big tent an' look roun' I thought it mus' be sorter like hebben, hit was so fine. I

seen many er circus sence den, but ain't none o' dem like dat ole-fashion one-ring circus o' Mr. Robinson's.

'De ban' played de pritties' music an' here come all de ladies an' gemmens, an' er string o' elephunts an' cages full o' wild beasts an' er ring streaked an' striped star-spangle clown, name o' John Lolo, drivin' de littles' horse you ever seed—not much higher'n de arm o' dis here ole rockin' cheer.

"Erbout dat time, when ev'body done left de ring, Mr. Robinson ses, ses he, 'Good mornin', Mr. Lolo; what you got dere?'

"'I got de fines' horse in de worl',' ses Mr. Lolo—'Whoa, January!'

"'What for you call him January?' ses Mr. Robinson.

"' 'Cause he was born in Septober,' ses Mr. Lolo, 'an' I'll give anybody five dollars ter ride 'im.'

"Ole Marster says ter me, 'Reckon you could ride 'im, Jesse?'

"'Who, me, ride dat little ole pony?' says I. 'Co'se I kin ride 'im!'

"'Den go in dar an' pick up er mighty easy five dollars,' ses he, an' in I went——"

"Did you ride him, Daddy Jesse?"

"Chile, dat little ole runt flung me eight foot de fus time an' mos' tied me in er bow knot, an' de nex' time he set down an' rolled over me. No, sah; I didn't ride him. He rode me. He took er speshul spite erginst me an' kep hit up as long as he lived."

"Why, Daddy Jesse——"

"I'm comin' ter dat right now. You see, when yo' Me-mamma, as you calls her, saw dat little ole pony horse

she was des er little teenchy gal, an' she mos' went crazy fer it. She must er been born wid er gol' spoon in her mouf, fer she got mighty nigh ev'ything she wanted.

"One o' Ole Marster's frien's heard erbout her wantin' dat pony, an' when de circus turned back fer de winter he traded Mr. Robinson an' Mr. Lolo out o' him. An' bless goodness, one day here come 'January' down ter Granite Hill, an' put up on us."

"Daddy Jesse, could Me-mamma ride him?"

"Now, dat's where de puzzlement comes in. He tuk ter her de fus day an' stayed friendly thoo an thoo.

"De fus time I put de saddle on him he went plum lame. My! but you'd er thought he'd done stuck er nail up ter es knee, he was dat lame. Yo' Me-mamma was so sorry fer 'im she give 'im sugar an' er apple an' rubbed es neck, an' mebbe dars whar de frien'liness started.

"But when I tuk de saddle off'n him an' turned him loose, you oughter seen 'im. He run an' jump an' kick up an' toss his head dis way an' dat 'cause he knowed how he fooled us. Dat lame business was des one o' his circus tricks."

"Daddy Jesse, what else could he do?"

"Do? Pshu, dat pony could do anything—dance, march, kneel down, find things when you hide 'em an' jump like er rabbit. But dere warn't nobody ever could ride 'im but yo' Me-mamma.

"Her big sister tried ter one day, but he spilt her same as he did me—but harder. An' when he done spilt 'er he lif' es head up in de air like er goat an' wrinkle es nose an' laugh out loud.

"As fer me, I let 'im erlone. He had too much sense fer er horse an' not ernough fer er man, an' dat make 'im po' comp'ny fer er member o' de church."

"What else, Daddy Jesse?"

"I don't speshully 'member but one other rookus, an' dat was when er bad boy dared yo' Me-mamma ter spit in January's face.

"She didn' tek nobody's dare, an' de nex' thing she knowed January had her by de arm wid es teeth. Better b'lieve she never tried dat trick no mo'!"

"And is that all, Daddy Jesse? Please tell me some more about January. Please, please."

"No, sah; dat's yo' Me-mamma's speshul story, an' I don't reckon she'd thank me fer messin' up wid it any mo'. Better go 'long an' git de balance fum her. Ax her——" But the Little Boy was out of hearing, on his way to the big house.

THE RAINCROW

"Now," said Daddy Jesse, as he baited the last hook on his trotline and the boat rested on a sandbar, "I'll talk to you 'bout dat tree frog, as you calls him, which ain't no tree frog, but des er ornery ole raincrow up yonner in dem catawber trees.

"When I'm er baitin' er fishhook I don't talk to nobody erbout nothin', 'cause it's mighty easy to stick er hook in yo' finger an' put bait juice in yo'sef. Bait juice kin raise er mighty rookus in any man, sometimes. It depends on whar de bait was raised——"

"Why do they call him a raincrow, Daddy Jesse?" asked the Little Boy.

"Don't make no diffunce which way I heads," grumbled the old man, "I finds yo' cuttin' in de road in front o' me!

"Honey, er raincrow is call er raincrow 'cause he crows when hit's rainin'. It mebbe ain't er rainin' right whar he is, but hit's rainin' not fur off an' de air is heavy. Nobody ain't never foun' yit whether he's glad er sorry."

"I wish I could see one."

"Well, you won't see much when you does. He's longer dan a mockin' bird, an' white underneath, an' got er long, curved bill. Take him all roun' an' up an' down I don't reck'n dar's des sech er selfish all-fer-me kind o' critter ter be foun' on de face o' de yearth.

"He don't 'sociate wid nobody, not even wid Mis' Raincrow, ef he's er him, ner wid Mr. Raincrow ef she's

er her. You never sees him down on de groun' huntin' bugs like any other bird, ner feedin' his young raincrows.

"He's done foun' out long ergo dat hit don't pay ter work fer yo'sef when dars somebody eroun' ready an' willin' ter take de job off yo' hands——"

"But, Daddy Jesse!"

"Don't 'but' me; don't 'but' me!" said the old man. "I knows des perzac'ly what yo' gointer say, an' I'm on mer way dar fas' as I can trabble. Des sit back an' gimme time!"

"De raincrow is des like one o' dese big rich white men what's got ev'ything goin' his own way an' des sets back an' lets other folks do it all.

"I reckon ef when I dies dey let's me come back here, an' be what I want ter be mos', I say, 'Lemme come wid er long tail an' white feathers down mer stomuck an' er long bill, an' gimme some catawbers up on er san'-bar whar I kin set in de shade all mer days an' eat catawber worms.'"

"Does he eat catawber worms, Daddy Jesse?" asked the Little Boy, laughing.

"He sholy do. He des sets up dar in de night an' watches der moth come erlong an' lay her eggs under de leaf, an' dey tells me he don't let nothin' bother dem eggs, ner de young worms when dey hatches out, tell dey gits des so big.

"When de time comes he sets up day by day an' picks 'em off, des like er man pickin' peaches, tell de las' one is gone. But by dat time de summer is gone, too, an' Mr. Raincrow up an' trabbles erlong somewhar else whar de sun is shinin'."

"Does he build his nest up in the catawber trees, too, Daddy Jesse?"

"Now, Honey, you is gittin' right ter de place whar I aimed ter start dis story, fer I was settin' out ter tell yo' erbout Ole Lady Hen an' bring in de raincrow later.

"Old Man Raincrow an' Old Lady Raincrow fell out years ergo erbout whose business it was ter build er nes', an' hit ended by not buildin' any ertall.

"When der time comes fer Old Lady Raincrow ter lay her eggs, she des draps 'em here an' dar in somebody else's nes', an' goes erlong erbout her business.

"An' so ev'y now an' then Mis' Redbird or Mis' Catbird or Mis' Joree finds er funny lookin' egg in her nes' what hatches out er raincrow, an' puts er strain on de whole fambly, like po' folks movin' in on you wid meat at fifteen cents, 'cause little birds is mos'ly kind-hearted an' won't let nothin' starve in de nes'.

"Dey tells me dis here raincrow bird is got a book-name o' some sort, but I des natchully can't call hit off-han'. Sounds like Cookwho——"

"You started out to tell about Old Lady Hen——"

"Tobesho!

"Well, Old Lady Hen done hear all dis talk erbout Mrs. Raincrow an' how she got out o' buildin' er nes', an' how she made somebody else raise her young uns, so she set erbout ter see how hit would work eroun' de farm.

"De house cat had done picked her box on de back porch wid cotton seed in it fer ter keep her kittens in, so what does Old Lady Hen do but go an' drap er egg right in on dem kittens, an' go off an' laugh an' brag erbout how she had done got shet of er three weeks' settin' job.

"Well, sah, de news trabbled like de measles, an' befo' long three mo' hens was puttin' eggs in on dem kittens ter keep warm an' be hatched out, an' de little chickens fed.

"Dey was all out in de yard one day, braggin' on hit, an' de old red rooster was off in er corner hawhawin' down in his chest, when Sister Cat come erlong an' set up ter catch de joke.

"Pritty soon Sister Cat scratch her ear, an' went off ter look in de box whar de eggs was gittin' so deep she hardly had er place ter set down. She set down on de outside an' wropped her tail eroun' her front foot, like cats does when dey want ter study.

"When she had done put two an' two tergether an' worked out de puzzle, she reached over in de box an' tuk er kitten by de scruff o' his neck an' toted him off ter de haylof'. Den she come back an' 'got ernother, an' so on tell she done move de whole fambly an' lef' de box ter de hens."

"What did the hens do, Daddy Jesse?"

"Do? Dey des kep' on layin' whar dey started, an' den all four of 'em claim de nes' an' tried to set on hit at once," the old man chuckled.

"Er hen ain't got de sense of er raincrow, er she would have scattered dem eggs."

Just then a long gray bird came across the lake and silently dived into the cool shade of the catalpas above the bar. "Dar he goes now," he said. "Dat's de same man I'm talkin' erbout. He sho was born wid er silver spoon in es mouf."

DADDY JESSE'S MEMORIES

The Little Boy was trying hard to study his lesson when through the open window, on the summer breeze, the voice of Daddy Jesse floated in.

He let the book fall and went softly into the backyard and listened with a smile upon his face. Presently he hurried away to the corner crib, climbed in, and took a seat by the old man who was shucking corn and singing.

He seized an ear of corn and began to tug away fiercely at the dry shuck, a proceeding which the old man observed, though he pretended otherwise. After a long silence he took pity on the friendly visitor.

"I was des er wonderin'," he said, "what done brought you down here an' got you so busy all of er sudden."

"Well, Daddy Jesse, I know you don't like to shuck corn, and I thought I'd come down and help you—and maybe you'd tell me about the old times at Granite Hill."

"Oomhoo! an' what was you doin' when de notion struck you?"

"I was studying," said the Little Boy, after an embarrassing pause.

"Oomhoo! Des swappin' jobs. Well, honey, I ain't got nothin' ergin cornshuckin', but it sho does make me heavy in de heart when I thinks of de ole times an' de things what went erlong wid cornshuckin' den. What was play has got ter be work." The old man heaved a deep sigh.

"What was play, Daddy Jesse?"

"Dar you go, an' here I go," muttered Daddy Jesse. "Looks like I can't git in no sort o' hole widout bein' drug out. Well, de shortes' way out of er wrong house is thoo de winder, an' here goes:

"Corn shuckin' was all play, back yonder, honey. Dey was good ole times, an' gone fer good, I'm erfeard. You see all dis crib full o' corn? Well, in one night we'd have ev'y ear shucked an' put back in de crib.

"In dem days dar warn't no telerphone but de wind. Hit sorter took de news eroun' when der was er corn-shuckin' at Granite Hill, an' all de niggers would catch it. De day of shuckin' we'd take de corn an' pile it out in de open in a big, long pile.

"We had sure nuff corn in dem days. Most in general, we'd pick er Sat'day fer de frolic, an' erlong erbout dark here'd come de niggers fum Sunshine, Bishop Pierce's place, and Rockby, whar Col. Dick Johnson had his school, an' Granite farm, Mr. Edge Bird's place, an' Smithfield, your great-gran'ma's home. You could hear 'em er mile off:

" 'We're all comin'—comin'—comin'.' "

"An' Mink, who was our leader, would stan' on de corn an' sing back:

" 'Here's corn ter shuck, an' pies ter eat, an' pritty girls ter dance wid.' "

" 'Comin'—comin'—comin'!' "

" 'Here's hog in de pit an' gravy in de bowl, an' pritty girls ter dance wid.' "

" 'Comin'—comin'—comin'!' "

" 'Here's Morris, too, for ter shake yo' feet, an' pritty girls ter dance wid.' "

“ ‘Comin’—comin’—comin’ !”

“ ‘Ef yo’ lose yo’ way oh! save yo’ soul—an’ pritty girls to dance wid!’ ”

Daddy Jesse gave an imitation, to the great admiration of his auditor.

“Why, Daddy Jesse, you certainly can sing!” he said earnestly.

“To be sho, honey! Didn’t you know dey had me ter raise de hymn ev’y Sunday in Bishop Pierce’s church fer nigh onter twenty years? All dey had ter do was ter name it an’ den Daddy Jesse ’d stan’ up an’ lead off. Ax yo Ma!”

“But did you all finish that whole pile of corn in one night?”

“Yes,” said the old man, laughing and stealing a glance at the boy.

“I was done gone ter church an’ lef’ you hangin’ onter de cornshuckin’. Yes, dey worked side erginst side, wid Mink pushin’. An’ when all de corn was done shucked an’ put back in de crib, Mink would blow de bugle he waked up de place wid of er mornin’ an sounded fer dinner.

“An’ when Ole Marster an’ Ole Miss’ an’ de young ladies hear dat horn, dey’d come out ter see de niggers march ter de table. While de men an’ gals shucked corn de women folks had been cookin’ an’ spreadin’ de table out in de open. De bes’ cooks worked on de pies.

“Honey, when I looks back an’ thinks of dat barbecue, an’ drippin’ gravy, an’ cake, an’ pies, an’ ’simmon beer, I gits weak all over.

"Atter we done et an' et till we can't eat no mo', you could hear ole Morris tunin' up es fiddle for 'Sally Gooden' an' George shakin' es tam'breen, an' Jerry shout-in' 'git yo' partners.'

"An' den de fun would start. Chile, you never will live ter see sech dancin' no mo'. La! la! la!

"When I think of dem ole times, an' de niggers dancin' in de light of de log fires, an' deir shadders dancin' on de end o' de barn, an' how happy we was, I des natchully don't thank dem Yankees fer settin' me free. I sholy wishes dey had lef' me erlone.

"Look out yonder at dem two ole mules comin' fum de fiel' an' dem two sorry niggers straddlin' 'em—an' me in here shuckin' corn for 'em! An' ter think out in de same fiel' dey been scratchin' over dar used ter be twenty.

"Dem two mules, honey, ain't never seen er full crop, an' dem two niggers ain't never had no fun in all deir life. Chile, ef I could des see de sun go down one mo' time an' hear our old-time niggers come singin' in fum de fiel's I'd be ready ter cross over ter whar Ole Marster is.

"All de fun an' laugh is gone out o' de country nigger. He ain't got no mo' reg'lar home. Hit's yonner at the chalk mines today, an' on de railroad termorrer, an' in er town ditch nex' day, an' dey wrop some striped britches eroun' es legs an' give 'im er pick on de dirt road. Free? Oh, yes, dey is free!" Daddy Jesse laughed a mirthless laugh. The Little Boy looked grave.

"But," he said, a little quaver in his voice, "they don't put the stripes on any of our negroes, do they, Daddy Jesse?"

"Our negroes, our negroes!" mimicked the old man in a whisper.

"I'd hate for any of grandpa's negroes to have to work on the roads with stripes on. I don't think I could stand that!"

The old man dropped the last ear of corn and turned his face away. Then suddenly he picked up the Little Boy and lifting him to his shoulder, bore him off to the yard. As he placed him on the steps he said:

"Honey, don't you worry 'bout any of yo' gran'pa's niggers gittin' on de chaingang. Dey was too well raised fer dat. An' b'sides, dey's all dead but me."

HORSE SENSE

"You stupid old thing," said the Little Boy, impatiently, as he tried for the fifth time to drive his mother's faithful old mule, Crap, out of the garden. Crap had every time passed the gate, blind to the fact that it stood invitingly open, and the day was warm.

"What dat you is sayin'?" asked Daddy Jesse, looking over the fence.

"I told Crap that she is stupid. I don't believe she has got one bit of sense. If she had any sense she would see that the gate is open and know that I want her to go out." The old man laughed softly.

"Honey, yo' sho' is givin' de wrong argyment. She don't go out 'cause she ain't got no sense, but 'cause she got too much sense. Don't you see how she takes er bite o' somep'n ev'y time she gits ter de gate, backs her ears an' passes erlong?"

"Yes," said the Little Boy, "that is just what she does."

"Des er little bite on top o' what she's already got is one bite more, an' bimeby ernough. She done foun' out long ergo which is de bes' side o' dat gate.

"Dat's why she is whar she is, an tryin' ter stay dar. Ef you hadder been up early dis mornin' an' heard her talkin' to Laura——"

"Talking to Laura! Why, Daddy Jesse, mules can't talk to each other."

"Well, dey kin, but some folks can't unnerstan' mule talk. Dat ain't er mule's fault."

"What did she say to Laura, Daddy Jesse?"

"Say? Mebbe you has notice how fat Crap is an' how po' Laura is. Well, de whyfo' of it is she's been stealin' Laura's somep'n ter eat, all erlong.

"Dis mornin' when dey 'cided ter move Laura over nex' ter er young mule, Crap an' Laura put der heads heads tergether ter say goodbye.

"'Laura,' ses Crap, 'I'm sholy sorry ter see you go, an' fer sake of ole times I'm gointer post you on feedin'. Dey is gointer put you nex' ter er young mule what ain't had time ter fin' out anything yet.

"I notice you ain't lookin' robus' lately, an' here is your chance ter lay some fat on your bones. Now, when you gits over dar, you wait tell Dave puts in de feed an' gits outer sight, den put your mouf unner de cross plank twix' de troughs, an' wid dat long, trimblin' top lip o' yourn you kin coax er powerful lot o' truck yo' way. Fus thing you know you'll be erbout as fat as I is.

"'An' now listen ter me some mo,' said Crap, as Laura started off. 'Don't you try ter work too hard out in de fiel'. Ef dey beats you on one side, turn de tother. Er few licks ain't as bad as er hard pull. Bimeby de nigger behind you is gointer wear hissef out befo' he wears you out.'

"La, dem mules is er caution! Ef you think dey ain't got no sense, you go out wid your Me-mamma nex' time she walks de fiel' an' wait tell she speaks ter somebody. Don't ax me, don't ax me no more! You des go 'long an' see fer yo'sef."

The Little Boy was so anxious to see what Daddy Jesse meant, he could hardly wait for the plows to start

after dinner before taking his Me-mamma's hand and dragging her off to the field. He found out when she called to one of the plowhands:

"Dave, what's the matter with that mule's backband? Let down the traces. Don't you see how it's rubbing her?" To the Little Boy's surprise, every mule in sound of her voice stopped and turned his head.

Some of them whinnied. Then the plowboys began to shake their lines and shout, "Get up, Laura!" "You, Crap!" "Get up there, Queen!" "You, Lady!"

Not a mule stirred except Crap, who drove one long hind leg back at Dave, humped his back and backed his ears.

"Me-mamma, why did all the mules stop when you spoke?" asked the Little Boy, amazed.

Daddy Jesse had stepped up behind, and answered the question:

"Dey stopped 'cause ev'y mule in dar knowed her voice. An' dey knowed as long as she is erbout nobody is gointer hit 'em er lick. An' dey stop 'cause she allus has er kin' word fer ev'ything on de place, an' mos' en-generly totes sugar er somep'n in her pocket ter give 'em.

"Er mule has horse sense, which dey tells me is de stronges' sense in de worl'. When dem mules sees yer Me-mamma early in de mornin' passin' eroun', de las' one of 'em sticks his head outer de stall winder an' ses as loud as he kin, 'Hongry! hongry! hongry!' What den? Den she ses, ses she, 'Dave, come right here. I don't b'lieve you is half fed dese mules. Feed 'em some mo'.

"Honey, dat is horse sense. You got er heap ter learn. Hit ain't all set down in er book. Git out in de

open wid de birds an' mules, an' cows, an' all o' de good Lord's chilluns an' talk ter 'em an' let 'em talk ter you. You won't lack fer comp'ny nowhar you is at, when you learns how."

"But, Daddy Jesse, how can I learn to talk to animals and birds and all the others? And how can they understand me?"

"What Daddy Jesse wants you to learn," said Memamma, drawing the Little Boy's curly head close to her, "is the universal language—the language of kindness.

"You can't get it from books. It comes from the hearts of men and women and little boys and girls. It is God's language. It is spoken in words sometimes, sometimes in smiles and sometimes in deeds. Everything living understands it.

"The mules are waitng because I sometimes give them lumps of sugar. I am sorry I forgot——"

"I didn't," said Jesse, producing five lumps. "I thought as how mebbe you'd want ter start somebody on dat langwedge terday.

"Honey, you tek dis sugar down de line an' den des git erway fum here or dem mules won't strike ernoder lick terday."

BRER RABBIT AN' BRER BEAR

Daddy Jesse was leaning back in his rocker, with his old hymnbook, bound in homespun, on his knee, and singing that good old tune, "I'm glad salvation's free," his mellow voice reaching far in the quiet of evening.

Daddy Jesse was at peace with the world and, better still, with himself. However, his half-closed eyes detected the Little Boy close at hand, waiting politely for the song to end. Presently he opened them wide in pretended surprise.

"Well," he said, "did you git that bear an' rabbit story fum yo' Me-mamma, lak I tole you'?"

"Part of it, Daddy Jesse. She said you would tell me the balance. I don't reckon you feel po'ly now or you wouldn't be singing."

"Whar did she leave Brer Rabbit? I got to sorter gyether up de loose ends."

"Well, you see, the woodcutter had made his little girl tie Brer Rabbit, and Brer Bear came along, and Brer Rabbit told him a big story about a dance, and supper, the woodcutter was to have that night, and how he had tied Brer Rabbit to be sure and have somebody on hand to play for the dancers.

"Then Brer Rabbit had got Brer Bear to let him tie him in his place so Brer Bear could get some of the big supper. And he ran off and laughed, but the woodcutter was mad and would have killed Brer Bear, only he prom-

ised to go and bring Brer Rabbit back. Then Me-mamma got to feeling po'ly."

"Oomhoo! I knows perzac'ly how she was feelin'. Howsomever, de nex' day atter Brer Rabbit fool dat bear he set eroun' de house feelin' oneasy in es mind.

"He made Mis' Rabbit leave de back do' open. Bye an' bye he look up de road, an' here come Brer Bear ramblin' erlong. Brer Rabbit poke 'es head outer de winder an' ses, ses he, 'Good mornin', Brer Bear.'

"Ses Brer Bear, 'I des come ter thank you fer what you done fer me yestiddy, Brer Rabbit. I had de time o' my life. We sho had fun.

"'De woodcutter didn't have ter spread his supper. Folks fum all over de settlement got him up er surprise party an' drapped in with barbecue, pies, honey an' all sorts o' vittles.

"'I mos' et myself ter death. De woodcutter brung out es big fiddle an' tol' me ef I would play fer de guests he'd give me er lot ter take home ter my folks. So I played tell mighty nigh sunup.

"'Den de folks crowd roun' an' begged me ter dance, 'cause dey knowed I was er mighty dancer fum my youth up; an' bein' as how dey was so perlite, I showed 'em er few steps den an' dar.

"'Ev'ybody patted dey hands, an' slapped dey legs an' sung out "Dance fer de ladies, dance fer de ladies!" an' "Juba catch er ringo." An' de woodcutter gimme so much ter carry home dey had ter send it fer me.'

"'You don't tell me,' ses Brer Rabbit, shuttin' his eyes mos' up.

" 'Yes,' ses Brer Bear, ' an' I'm here to thank you ergin an' tell you I done foun' ernother hole in de woodcutter's gyarden fence, an' ef you will come erlong I'll show it ter you, so you can go in an' git ernother mess o' dem nice collards.'

" 'I'll go er long way ter 'blige any frien' o' mine.' Brer Bear tol' sech a straight tale dat Brer Rabbit more'n half way b'lieve him. Besides, he was hongry ergin, an' it ain't hard ter b'lieve anything you wanten b'lieve.

" 'But Brer Rabbit ain't been in dis worl' er long time fer nothin', an' he ses, ses he, 'All right, but wait er minute, 'cause dis is my day ter slick up. In de meantime, set down out dar in de shade an' study erbout all dem good things you had ter eat last night.'

" 'So Brer Bear sot down in de shade outside, smilin' all over, an' Brer Rabbit call his wife an' ses ter her, easy-like, 'Chile, comb my hair, an' roach it, an' grease me up quick. An' put plenty o' grease on my ears. Make 'em slick as er peeled onion.'

" 'An' Mis' Rabbit tidied him up nice, an' greased his ears, an' pritty soon he skipped outer de back do' an' come eroun' in front. Brer Rabbit never comes de way anybody looks fer him. Brer Bear looks him over an' ses, ses he:

" 'You sho does look scrumptious, Brer Rabbit.'

" 'Yes,' ses Brer Rabbit, 'dis is my day ter shine. Come erlong, Brer Bear; you take one side o' de road an' I'll take de other, 'cause de san' is pretty deep in de middle.'

" 'Bimeby dey comes ter de woodcutter's gyarden fence whar Brer Bear had done made er hole by twistin'

de wires open. Brer Rabbit was dat hongry he slipped in an' rambled off 'mongst de collards in er hurry, but Brer Bear he twist de wires back ergin an' loped roun' ter de woodcutter's front do' an' whistled twice like er red bird.

"De woodcutter comes hustlin' out den, an' bofe uv 'em race down ter de gyarden an' went in ter hem Brer Rabbit up—"

"Did they hem him up Daddy Jesse?" asked the Little Boy, excitedly.

"Dey sholy did, honey. Dey run him down an' hemmed him up; an' it warn't long befo' de woodcutter had 'im in his arms holdin' 'im tight. But when de woodcutter started ter shet an' latch de gyarden gate, he had use fer one han', an' he tuk Brer Rabbit by de ears wid de other——"

"Oh, Daddy Jesse!"

"Yes. Des erbout dis time Brer Rabbit put all o' his legs erginst Mr. Man an' r'ared back mightly. He ain't had dem ears greased fer nothin'. He slipped out o' de woodcutter's han' an' was gone like er streak o' lightnin'.

"Brer Bear looked at de hole he made in de air, an' ses, ses he, 'Well, I done my part.' 'Yes,' ses de woodcutter, 'yo' done yo' part, an' now we got ter try ernother plan—if you can think up ernother.'

"Brer Bear put his han's on his hips an' laughed hissef mos' ter death; ses he, 'I got ernother, an' I'll sho git him nex' time.'"

"Did he get him next time, Daddy Jesse?"

"Honey, you see dat clump o' pines up yonner on de ole buryin' groun' an' de full moon risin' on de tother side?"

"Yes," said the Little Boy, with sudden gravity.

"Well, der ain't no speshul signs in it, but I des natch-ully perfers not ter talk erbout Brer Rabbit when de full moon is shinin' thoo graveyard trees. An 'yo' Me-mamma is waitin' somewhar fer yo' anyhow." She did not have to wait much longer.

THE RABBIT AND THE WOLF

Daddy Jesse had been nodding in the sun, but seeing the Little Boy passing, he began to laugh and chuckle in a most provoking way.

Of course this had the intended effect. In a few minutes the Little Boy was pulling at his coat sleeve and imploring him to tell what he was laughing about.

"I was des thinkin' an' 'studyin' erbout Brer Rabbit an' Brer Wolf," said the old man, wiping his eyes and stretching his limbs in the warm April sun, "an' how Brer Wolf got to de circus.

"Set down here an' lemme see ef I can straighten out de fac's. Is you gointer listen all thoo an' not bust me up wid dat back talk? Tell me! Tell me, 'cause I ain't huntin' fer no trouble terday."

"I'll be still, Daddy Jesse. I won't ask you a single question." And let it be recorded that for one time the Little Boy did not forget to keep his promise.

"Well," said the old man, "as nigh as I kin riccollec', de fac's was mos'ly like dis: Ole Brer Wolf was stretched out down ter his house tryin' ter nod in de sun, but Sister Wolf kep' er pesterin' him wid how hongry de chillun was, an' ef he don't go git 'em somep'n ter stop dey mous dey would run her erbout crazy.

"Den Brer Wolf up an' say, ef she do des like he tell her it won't be long befo' he'll have Brer Rabbit simmerin' in de skillet.

"Ses he, 'Go on down ter Brer Rabbit's house, an' tell him ter come erlong up here an' feel my pulse, an' look at my tongue, for I'm desprit sick an' maybe dead fo' you git back.

"An' when you is tellin' him, raise er row an' tear yo' hair like yo' po' heart was broke. Come erlong back ahead er little, an' when he gits here, tell him hit's too late, but ter soun' me fer signs o' life all de same.

" 'An' den des stan' erside an' watch Ole Man Wolf.'

"Sister Wolf do jes' like he tell her. She certainly did tear up de yearth wid grief, an' had all de neighbors runnin' in ter see what ailed her.

"Brer Rabbit, he lif' one ear an' drap it, an' he lif' nother ear an' drap it, an' chewed hard. Den he got up an' an' loped erlong atter Sister Wolf tell he come ter whar she live, an' look in on ole Brer Wolf.

"Sister Wolf riz up fum es bed, wipin' her eyes an' ses, ses she, 'he's gone, Brer Rabbit! he's sholy gone; but come in, ef you please sir, an' soun' him fer yo'sef.' Den ses Brer Rabbit, shiftin' his cud:

" 'Did he groan long an' loud when he died, Sister Wolf?' An' Sister Wolf answer back an' say:

" 'No, sir; he was too bad off ter groan!'

" 'Huh!' says Brer Rabbit. 'I ain't never hear of no man dyin' tell he done groan long an' loud.'

"Brer Wolf see den whar de mistake was made, an' start right in ter fix it up. He give er long an' mighty groan, an' den lay still.

" 'Huh!' ses Brer Rabbit, des so. 'Huh! I ain't never hear no dead man groan befo'. He jumped up in de air an' knocked his foot on de flo', an' traveled down de lan'

wid Brer Wolf at his heels. But dere never was er day Brer Rabbit couldn't leave Brer Wolf in a race.

"It warn't long befo' Brer Rabbit was restin' in er fence corner an' Brer Wolf was trottin' erlong back home."

The old man waited a moment, but the Little Boy was faithful to his promise. "Anything ail you terday?" he asked, looking over his glasses with apparent anxiety.

"No, Daddy Jesse. But is that all?"

"De nex' day," said the old man, smiling, "Brer Rabbit was in de Man's gyarden chawin' on er collard leaf when Brer Wolf come erlong an' see him dar thoo er crack in de fence, wid Sister Patridge not fur off noddin', wid her head unner her wing.

"'What ails Sister Patridge?' ses he.

"'Oh,' says Brer Rabbit, 'she lef' her head up ter de house ter have it combed an' is des er waitin' fur 'em ter fetch it back. I reck'n I better be movin' erlong, 'cause dis is de day fer my head ter be combed, too.' An' wid dat he slipped out de tother side o' de gyarden an' raced off home.

"'Set de cage by de hole in de do'!' he shouted ter Sister Rabbit, 'an' sot de trigger! Brer Wolf be 'long putty soon ter catch me wid my head off. An' git me some pokeberry juice, quick!'

"An' here come Brer Wolf, an' knock on de do'. Brer Rabbit done drawed a red ring eroun' es neck an' clum up inside de wall an' had es head stickin' thoo er hole by de time Brer Wolf got ter de winder an' was passin' de time o' day wid Sister Rabbit.

"'Whar's de ol' man?' says he, des so.

"'He's layin' up behin' de door,' says Sister Rabbit, 'but his hair hatter be combed an' roached, an' I got es head hangin' up dar on de wall ter dry befo' I puts it back on him.'

"An' Brer Wolf see de head on de wall wid er red ring eroun' hit, an' he ses, ses he, 'I sholy would like ter see him widout es head on.' An' Sister Rabbit tell him ter crawl thoo de hole in de door an' come in.

"In des erbout er minute mo' Brer Wolf was in de cage, an' de trigger said 'Blip!' Well, sir, setch doin's as der was den! Brer Rabbit come down, an' him an' Sister Rabbit cut de 'short dog,' an' de 'pigeon wing' an' racked an' shuffled tell de house shook.

"Erbout dat time, 'way down de road, de circus come erlong, er blowin' of de trumpets an' er beatin of de drums, an' Brer Rabbit raced off ter de fence corner an' called ter de head man ter come here quick, he got somep'n ter sell.

"An' de head man went erlong ter Brer Rabbit's house, an' Brer Rabbit sold him Ole Man Wolf, cage an' all. An' dat's how Brer Wolf got ter de circus."

"What did the man pay for him, Daddy Jesse?"

"Honey, he des cut er hole in er sack o' oats on de las wagon, an' Brer Rabbit got es folks tergether an' de had er dinner 'leven miles long!"

THE LOST DINNER

The Little Boy came running in from the yard arrayed in his soldier suit, his paper tassels dancing merrily, and saluted with his tin sword.

"Me-mamma," he said, "Daddy Jesse was too busy to talk today, and told me to ask you about that dinner you didn't get, the time General Sherman came along. Please, ma'am——"

"Well," said Me-mamma, laughing, "now that he has started you, it's just a question of time, and this is as good as any other time."

"She took off her glasses and looked back into the past after the fashion of old people, a little smile on her lips.

"You remember I told you about my father's old home, Granite Hill, just beyond Sparta; well, ten or twelve miles farther was Mr. David Dixon's place. It covered about thirty thousand acres, and he had many hundreds of negroes to cultivate it. He was called Georgia's biggest planter and he lived like a king.

"His house was large, and the number of houses around it made the place look like a town. Mr. Dixon was a great friend of my father and admired my mother and sisters very much. His servant, going for the mail every day, passed Granite Hill and always stopped with something that Mr. Dixon sent—a big rattlesnake watermelon, a basket of grapes, a lamb, or strawberries or something he thought we might not have.

"He had written a book on farming and always tried to have the first of everything in its season. He often had our family down to spend a day and although I was a very little girl, he would send me a special invitation. This was a great deal of pleasure for me, and he certainly did know how to entertain a child.

"He always had a certain young negro woman to take charge of and look after me. That was all she had to do that day. She would fix me the prettiest popcorn I have ever seen, make candy for me, peel sugar cane and crack nuts and play with me.

"After dinner, she would take a large basket of food, for the fish, and the dinner bell, and we would go and stand on the bridge over the pond and ring the bell for the fish to come to their dinner——"

"Me-mamma, do they ring bells for fish when their dinner is ready?"

"They did for Mr. Dixon's fish. And when the bell rang they would come as fast as they could. The water would look as though a whirlwind had struck it. I thought it was fine fun to ring that bell. But how I am running on! I started to tell you about the dinner we didn't get.

"When my father was wounded in Virginia, he was taken to the home of Mrs. Grainer and stayed there two months. When he came home Mrs. Grainer was glad to let her daughter come with him, for Richmond was not a good place to live in at that time.

"So Miss Fannie came along and was our guest, and Mr. Dixon got up a big dinner in her honor and invited us all down to spend the day. But we never got there.

"Sherman's army was passing through Georgia at that time and was getting pretty close to Sparta. He missed Sparta, the bigger part of the army going around, and the smaller part through Milledgeville, on this side. Milledgeville was the capital of Georgia in those days.

"The night before the dinner we heard them blowing up buildings in Milledgeville, and our windows shook, though we were nearly thirty miles away. For several days we could see where the big army was by the smoke of the barns and houses they burned, and my mother would go out on the porch at night, and say, 'I think we can spend another night at home. The fires are too far for them to get here before morning.' You see, we expected they would come by Granite Hill and burn us too.

"Well, the night before Mr. Dixon's dinner the fires didn't look so far off, and somebody came by and told us that the Yankees would not get to Sparta, but had turned off towards Mr. Dixon's. So my mother called up Daddy Jesse and told him to go down there and tell Mr. Dixon she was afraid to take the young ladies out on the road, and not to expect her. And to tell him how disappointed we all were.

"I was standing by, yelling, and they all knew how I felt. Well, about one o'clock my mother came in from the porch and said she thought the army had reached Mr. Dixon's, for she saw a great smoke over that way, and you may be sure I was glad then I hadn't gone.

"About dark, here came Daddy Jesse back, and full of excitement. Said he, 'Ole Miss, I got ter Marse David's des in time ter see de bigges' spread of vittles I ever laid eyes on. Dar was barbecue hog, lamb, shote, veal, beef

an' chicken, an' big hom'ny, an' sparrowgrass, an' salad, an' sweet tater pie, an' roas' turkey, an' lemon pie, an' scuppernong wine, an' blackberry jam, an' rice an' gravy——

" 'Well, well,' said mother, 'never mind the rest; what happened?'

" 'Ole Miss, I ain't more'n got shet o' de message you sent befo' here come dem Yankees ridin' up, an' de man dey calls Gen'l Sherman walks right in. He looks at dat spread o' vittles an' ses, ses he, to de crowd behin' him, 'A dinner fit fer a king!'

" 'An' den, 'Dey mus' have been expectin' us!' All de other niggers done run off an' lef' me ter wait on de table. De Gen'l ses ter me, 'What's yo' name, ole man?' an' I tells him, scrapin' my foot mighty perlite, 'cause I didn't like dat white man's looks;

" ' "It's er dinner Marse David Dixon is givin' ter my young misses an' another young lady fum Virginny."

" 'Wid dat, dey lif' up deir glasses an' say, 'Less ev'y-body drink to de young ladies!' An' dat all was needed ter make de dinner perfec' was de young ladies, an' dey certainly was sorry dey warn't on hand!' We weren't sorry," said Me-mamma, laughing over the memory.

"And is that all?" asked the Little Boy.

"No. Daddy Jesse then added: 'Now, Ole Miss, I'm gointer tell you somethin' scan'lous. De Gen'l an' his folks hab some raisin' an' knowed how ter use er napkin an' cross de fork an' knife on de plate when dey was done, but no sooner had dey got out befo' ernother bunch swarmed in an' act des like pigs.

“‘An’ when dey done cleaned up de las’ crum’ dey took ev’y piece o’ Marse David’s silver erlong wid ’em. An’ now I reck’n I’d better be huntin’ de kitchen. I been smellin’ things all day.’”

“Did the Yankees catch Mr. Dixon, Me-mamma?”

“Now, that is something I can’t remember about,” said Me-mamma. “I don’t suppose they did. He had some mighty fast horses and knew all the plantation roads. But they didn’t burn his house. Maybe that was because of the dinner, and maybe it was because Mr. Dixon’s old mother was there.”

LITTLE MISS'S PONY

"Aunty" paced back and forth on the broad veranda at Granite Hill, pausing frequently at the top of the steps leading from the rose garden and straining her eyes in the deepening shadow of evening.

"I wonder what has become of the child?" she said anxiously to Daddy Jesse, who was calmly loading his garden tools into the wheelbarrow. "I hope Morgan hasn't thrown her. Hadn't you better walk up the road and see if you can see anything of her?"

The old man chuckled: "No'm! Ain't nuthin' goin' ter happen to dat chile. She'll be 'long t'rectly wid er new story 'bout how Morgan done dis an' he done dat. Yonner she comes now, comin' roun' thoo de big gate. She's sho got him on er run."

At this instant the sound of a horse's feet on the hard ground of the avenue was heard, and presently "Little Miss" reined up her pony, not very gently, at the front gate.

"Don't scold, Aunty, and I will tell you why I am so late. Take the reins, Daddy Jesse! I've a great mind to ask you to lock Morgan up without any supper; the mean thing!"

"Oomhoo!" said Daddy Jesse, chuckling as he obeyed. "Des lak I say! Horse, you got er heap ter settle for some er dese days!"

"Indeed, Aunty, he is mean. The girls from town came as far as the branch with me. It was up a little

from the rain we had this afternoon, and because it was wider than usual Morgan positively refused to cross it. When I whipped him and tried to make him cross, he put his head down and turned around so fas I almost fell off."

Aunty took off her glasses and, looking off down the avenue, smiled knowingly.

"I did not know Morgan was ever guilty of such a trick. He must have inherited it. But how did you get across?"

"Aunty, Big Jim came along when I was about to give up, and did the funniest thing! 'Wait a minute!' he said, 'I know dis horse's fambly.' He pulled Morgan's ear down, bit it and whispered to him. Then he led him through the water without any more trouble, talking all the time: 'You ain't got er speck er manners ter treat er chile dater way!' he said. 'Somebody ought ter wear you out!' And he told me to ask you how Morgan's mother used to do with my mother when she was a little girl. Please tell me, Aunty."

"The story goes back to Morgan's grandmother," said Aunty, drawing the child down beside her on the settee. "Away back in 1865, one dark, rainy night, there was a knock at the door and your grandfather, who had come back from the army on account of a wound, went out to see who was there. The great war between the states was just ending and the country was full of stragglers: so we kept the door locked at night. In a few moments he returned with a gentleman who proved to be none other than General Breckenridge, one of President Davis' cabinet officers—and a very distinguished gentleman he was. The Confederate government hurriedly

dissolved over in the county next to this, at Washington, and the President and his cabinet officers were trying to escape out of Georgia in different directions. General Breckinridge was in serious trouble, for his horse had become so lame that he could not proceed. Well, the only horse we had on the place was a broad-back pony named Morgan, bought for your Aunt Harriet in Kentucky by a gentleman friend of the family. Our other horses and our mules too had been sent down into Jefferson county to keep them from being captured by the Federals. We all felt sorry for Harriet, for she loved her pony almost as much as she would have loved him had he been human, and he seemed just as fond of her. But there was no time for delay; the liberty if not the life of a Confederate general was at stake, and at any moment a squad of cavalymen might surround the house. Still, as General Breckenridge would not take the pony until your Aunt Harriet gave her consent, your grandmother awoke her and explained the situation. Poor Harriet! It was a great trial for her; she could not keep back her tears. But she consented at last; only nothing would do but that she must go down and tell Morgan goodbye, and see that the strange saddle, when put on him, did not rub his back. When this was done, with tears running down her cheeks, she started to leave him, but he called her back with a little whinny she understood. He rubbed his head against her and she patted his neck, and that was their farewell to each other.

“But when his new rider had mounted she said to him:

"Take good care of Morgan, please, sir'; and to Morgan she whispered as he passed her, 'Do your best, Morgan, and save the general!'"

"And did he save him, Aunty?" asked Little Miss eagerly.

"Yes! General Breckinridge reached the coast safely, and in an open boat sailed to Nassau, an English city in the Bahama Islands. We never heard of Morgan again, but the next morning the gentleman who had bought him for Harriet and who was a Kentuckian, called us out to look at the mare which had been left.

"'You had the best of the trade, my child,' he said, 'a great deal the best of it! There was only a pebble wedged in her foot. Her lameness is almost gone. She will soon be well.' And then he told us all about her family record; how this member of it had won a great race in Lexington, how another had distinguished himself at New Orleans, and how others had won large sums of money for their owners. But it was against this mare that she was pure white, for white is not a favorite color with race-horse men; so she had been devoted to use under the saddle. Harriet named her 'Lily Breckinridge,' and soon became as fond of her as she had been of Morgan.

"And now you will understand what Big Jim was talking about when I tell you that Lily's first colt, christened 'Evie' but generally known as 'Vixen,' was given to your mother to ride to school, and that frequently Evie, when she reached the branch which Morgan would not cross for you this evening, would put her head

down, turn around and around, and then come back home at full speed. And Evie was the mother of your pony. Your grandmother used to insist that your mother had trained Evie, and that the days she refused to cross the branch were the days on which your mother would have missed her lessons at school; a charge, however, which was always indignantly denied. But your Morgan must be excused for his trick. He has certainly inherited it. Now run in, get your supper and go to bed, or you will lose the roses in your cheeks. Sometime I will tell you about another great Confederate general who took refuge in our house at the close of the war."

GENERAL TOOMBS' COAT

Daddy Jesse was patiently sewing a button on his coat, and humming a plantation hymn, when the Little Boy raced up to the door of his cabin, astride of an old broom handle, that was doing pony duty, and immediately became an interested spectator.

"Where you going, Daddy Jesse?"

"I'm aimin' to go to de distracted meetin', ef nobody don't bother me whilst I'm gittin' dis button sewed on. It ain't much of er coat, nohow, an' wid buttons gone it mout as well be called no coat at all.

"Somehow dis job puts me in mind of de time I sewed buttons on dat coat Marse Bob Toombs swapped yo' great gran'pa——"

"Tell me about it, please, Daddy Jesse," said the Little Boy, letting his pony fall to the ground and settling himself in the doorway by the old man.

"I sholy made er mistake when I brung up dat coat," said Daddy Jesse, laughing, "an' I knowed it befo' de words was outer my mouf.

"Honey, you run erlong an ax somebody else ter tell you dat story, 'cause I can't. I'm mixed up on de fac's what leads up ter it. An' den I des natchully ain't got de time, for befo' I gits dis here coat impaired dey'll be lookin' out of de church winder fer somebody ter come erlong an' raise der chune."

The Little Boy knew who "somebody" meant in the old man's mind, and, mounting his pony again, raced back to the big house, and was soon leaning on his grandmother's knee, saying: "Please, Me-mamma," in his irresistible way.

"That is the story I promised you," she said, "after telling you about Gen. Breckinridge and Aunt's pony.

"Gen. Toombs was another great general, who was with President Davis when the Confederacy broke up over in Washington—not the Washington where presidents live now, but the one over in Wilkes county.

"President Davis made all the generals who were with him leave and try to save themselves from being captured by the Yankees, except Gen. Ragan, who belonged in Texas, and he was going to try to reach Texas with him.

"Well, some time after Gen. Breckenridge had gone off on your aunty's pony, Morgan, Gen. Toombs came one night to my aunt's old home, Brookington, which is right next to Granite Hill. Gen. Toombs stayed there for a little while, and there is where the story of the coat Daddy Jesse told you about begins.

"One night my father came home with the funniest suit on I had ever seen. It was thin and fitted him so tight it was almost bursting in the seams, and the buttons were about all gone.

"My father, who was a much stouter man than Gen. Toombs in those days, had swapped clothes with him because the weather was getting cool, and there was no

guessing where the general would be obliged to go before the winter was over; and because the Yankees, who were after him, knew all about the thin suit and how it looked.

"After awhile my father brought him over to Granite Hill in the night and put him in the front room on the right as you come up the steps. The servants were told that a sick man was in that room and no one was allowed to go there.

"Some of the family would carry his meals in, and I reckon he would sit out on the porch at night after the negroes were all gone. Gentlemen would come down from Sparta after dark to see him and, to pass the time, they would play whist and smoke a great deal. He didn't have such a bad time of it while he was at Granite Hill.

"But one day I heard Tom, who was the man that we kept to wait around the house, tell Sylla, the cook, that there wasn't any sick man in that front room, but it was Gen. Toombs, who was hiding from the Yankees, and I went and told my mother what Tom said.

"She looked very grave when she heard it, for, as I learned afterwards, there was a large reward offered for Gen. Toombs, and Tom was the one negro we had that couldn't be trusted.

"My father was afraid he would go up to Sparta at night and tell the Yankees and they would come down and capture the general. Tom, we found out, had gone around on the front porch and peeped through the blinds.

"Of course he knew Gen. Toombs, for he had waited on him many times when he visited us, which he did whenever court was in session.

"Well, that night, Gen. Toombs was hurried away to another plantation we had down in Jefferson county. Afterwards he went over to stay with Col. Dan Hughes, in Laurens county, and finally he passed on down to Mobile, which is on the gulf in Alabama, and sailed away to the West Indies.

"Bring me your little geography some time, and I will draw you a line showing just how he escaped, for he never was captured."

"But about the coat, Me-mamma, that Daddy Jesse sewed the buttons on?"

"We'll come to that directly. I want to tell you first what became of President Davis and Gen. Ragan. They started to Texas, but were overtaken and captured near Irwinton, about forty miles from here, and put in prison for a long time.

"They were carried to Macon first, riding in a covered wagon called an ambulance, and Mrs. Davis had in her arms her little baby, only a few months old.

"This baby came to be known as Winnie, and was called the Daughter of the Confederacy. Her real name was Varina.

"Now isn't it strange that over in Granite Hill I should be helping Gen. Toombs to escape when I was a little girl, and that a few days after, your grandfather, who was a little boy over in Macon, should crawl between the legs of the Yankee soldiers in front of the Lanier House and see President Davis get out of the ambulance and walk in between the two iron lions that crouched by

the ladies' entrance? We didn't know each other then.

"When this little boy grew up, and Mr. Davis died, he wrote the lines they carved on one of his monuments in Richmond.

"The next time you are in Macon go around on Walnut street and see the house Mr. Guttenberger lives in.* There is where Mrs. Davis and little Winnie lived for many months with Mrs. Howell Cobb.

"And if you'll look on my mantelpiece you'll see a little glass Winnie Davis gave your grandfather at a dance in Macon when she came there as a young lady, just thirty years ago."

"But about the coat Daddy Jesse sewed the buttons on, Me-mamma?"

"You certainly stick to the point, and I reckon that means a lawyer in the family.

"Well the Toombs coat and pants wouldn't fit anybody in the family and so, after awhile, they fell to Daddy Jesse. I suppose my father had burst the buttons off and Daddy Jesse had to sew them on, because old Daphne, his wife, wouldn't do anything for him.

"He was very proud of that suit. But the suit that the general carried off with him had a history, too. It was made from wool raised at Granite Hill and was a beautiful gray.

"The cloth was woven by your Aunty, who was then just a girl, and the day she wove it on her hand loom she broke the record for Georgia, which was twenty yards.

*Now a hospital known as the Clinic.

She wove twenty-one yards and was still weaving and singing when my father made her stop.

"All the boys of Rockby, Col. Johnson's school, were in love with her, and that day they stuck pretty close, filling her bobbins and cheering her on. It was some of this cloth that went into the suit that Gen. Toombs wore away.

"Now that it's all past and gone, I don't suppose there is any harm in saying we were, at that time, mighty sorry to see that suit go. But my father must be excepted, for he only laughed and seemed to think it a good joke that General Toombs' clothes were too small for him."

THE FLORIDA DOG

"Me-mamma," asked the Little Boy, coming in one day with a slight frown of perplexity crinkling his forehead, "why are old Tag's eyes so different from our other dogs?"

"In what way are they different?" Me-mamma was pleased to note the evidence of close observation, which is the real basis of all education, and led the little fellow along with her question.

"Why, they are the funniest gray I ever saw, and he must see mighty well, because you can't hide a thing where he won't find it."

"Well, he is different from all other dogs I know, because his grandmother and great-grandfather and all his parents away back belonged to a different race, and were highly trained along certain lines.

"He is called a Florida dog, and how his ancestors got to Florida is quite a story."

But by this time the Little Boy was in his grandmother's lap, his eager face upturned and imploring her to tell him about the Florida dogs. And here is the story Me-mamma told out of her memories and traditions:

"Two hundred years ago and more, perhaps, Florida was a very wild place and full of half-wild cattle, and Cuba, the Spanish island about eighty miles away, was thickly populated by the Spanish, and the people were rich and elegant.

"But Cuba lacked beef, and the custom of sending boats over to Florida for wild cattle sprang up. The men who carried on this business were called buccaneers, the word buccaneer in Spanish meaning butcher.

"After awhile these men, who had very little respect for the law, began to rob other ships, and, to hide their crimes, kill all the people on them; and so at length the word buccaneer began to mean pirate. But this is another story.

"The buccaneers, or butchers, carried with them into Florida large, fierce dogs to help catch the cattle, and these dogs became wonderfully expert. They would run along beside a cow, jump up, catch her lip and, stopping suddenly, throw her heels over head and then hold her till the butcher came up.

"Many of these dogs were kept in Florida, which was owned by the Spanish in those days, and carefully bred, generation after generation, until a type was formed, noted for its courage and intelligence. Some of them were there when the Americans bought Florida, and probably a few are there still.

"The original buccaneers disappeared, but the French and English pirates, who sailed about below Florida to catch Spanish ships carrying gold from South America, took their name, and a very appropriate one it was for them, because they were heartless butchers by trade.

"Tag's grandmother, or maybe it was his great-grandmother, was named Sal, and my father kept her on his Florida place, on Lake Eustis, to watch the orange

grove and keep out the half-wild cattle that would wander around in droves and do a great deal of damage.

"Sal watched faithfully, and when the cattle came, would drive them out or raise the alarm, and the men would go and help her.

"There was one big old steer that gave her a world of trouble. Almost every day he would make his way into the grove while Sal was taking a noon nap, and for this steer she soon developed a mortal hatred.

"Finally one day she was observed to be walking up and down the fence with a tread as noiseless as a cat's, watching the steer coming. He led the cattle down to the water's edge and swam out in the lake to get around the end of the fence into the orchard, and there in the water, Sal met him. It was a bad day for that steer.

"Sal took him by the lip and swam straight out into the lake with him. She would get on his back and bark and let him swim almost to shore, then she would take him out again. After awhile the steer drowned.

"Sal came to the house barking, and in her way telling everybody about her exploit, and receiving their praise with delight. She seemed to know as well as anybody that the steer would never give any more trouble.

"Tag is not a pure-blooded Florida dog, but he seems to have inherited their intelligence and instinct. We used to have a great many hogs on this place, and Tag knew them all, down to the smallest shote.

"My father used to amuse visitors by having the negroes, now and then, bring a strange pig and put it in the pen with the other hogs and then send Tag in to find it. Tag would go, and walk among them quietly until

he came to the strange pig, and then, taking him by the ear, gently lead him out. He was never known to make a mistake.

"My father thought a great deal of Tag and used to let him sleep on the rug. Tag would sleep and dream and bark at times till father would wake him with a touch of his foot. And when father had the nightmare, as he did sometimes, and made a noise in his throat, Tag would go and root his cold nose under his chin and whine and push him with his feet until he awoke.

"They were certainly great friends, and I have heard father say he would not take a thousand dollars for Tag. It was 'turn about is fair play' with them. Now, which do you think was the smarter dog, Sal or her grandson?"

The Little Boy studied the proposition carefully, and presently his face lighted up:

"I think both of them were the smartest, Me-mamma." And to this happy compromise, Me-mamma laughingly assented.

THE COWBELLS

Daddy Jesse was cleaning the carriage harness in the shade of a chinaberry tree out in the broad backyard. As the Little Boy approached, he began to talk: "Here yo' come now, lickin' yo' fingers. I know yo' been pesterin' yo' ma to death an' she done loaded you off on me! If you ain't been eatin' de icin' off de cake! Child, don't you know no better?"

"They hadn't put it on, Daddy Jesse!"

"Don't make no diffunce! Never was too much icin' fer any cake, an' dis one is sho' a big cake! La! La! La! Just ter think, Little Miss is twenty years ol'!"

"It don't seem no time since dey called me in to see dat precious baby! An' didn't dis ol' nigger feel proud when yo' gran-ma say to me, "Daddy Jess, I'm goin' to let you name her!"

"A lump come up back o' my mouf an' I had ter swaller fas' ter keep fum cryin'—I was so happy!"

"Did you name her, Daddy Jesse?"

"Honey, don't yo' hear me comin' to dat very pint? 'Course I named her! Says I—when I got de best of dat lump—'Misssus, I'm goin' ter name her for yo' sister, de bes' woman de good Lord ever made, an' fer de state whar she was borned!"

"'I knowed you was,' says she, laughin' fit to kill her-sef; an' dat's de way Little Miss Virginia got her name! But I done fergot!—What yo' gran'ma send you out here

fer besides gittin' rid o' you? Ax me, ax me, an' move erlong!"

"Daddy Jesse, she said you'd tell me why Mr. Middlebrooks put bells on all of his cows."

"Oomhoo! Curisority agin! You got mo' curisority than anything on the plantation 'ceptin' dat coon what Miss Ben caught in her henhouse awhile back.

"But dat sho is de way to fin' out things—ax an' keep on axin'! You say yo' gran'ma sont you out here fer me to tell you 'bout dem cows?

"Well, come erlong an' set down here on de harness box, 'cause I never could talk to folks far off. An' don't you lay hands on nothin'!

"I got to git dis harness shinin' fer to meet de quality folks what's comin' over fum Macon to Little Miss' party termorrer. If you so much as lay a finger on a strap or buckle, I'm done with dat cow story for good!"

"I won't move a thing, Daddy Jesse."

"I knows you won't, honey, ef it's nailed down or drove in de groun'—whar was I?"

"'Bout the cows——"

"Sholy! I was erbout ter ax you is you ever been down to de cowlot of a Chrismus mornin' an' see all de cows down on dey knees a-prayin'?

"No, Daddy Jesse, I didn't know that animals knew how to pray."

"An' raised right here on dis place! You sho mus' move aroun' with yo' eyes shet! You must suttinly have a heap to learn!

"Well, dey do pray on a Chrismus mornin', which is more dan a lot o' folks do! But, as I was sayin', ol'

Henry, Mr. Middlebrooks' man, went down to de cowpen 'bout de crack o' day las' Chrismus an' all de cows was down on dey knees 'ceptin' Betty, de bell cow.

"Henry come erlong back an' tol' Mr. Middlebrooks dat dey all look up at Betty, an' up in de sky, with dey mouths a-workin'; dat dey kept on a-lookin' an' a-lookin' tell he sot de milk bucket down on de groun' an' went erlong back.

"He tell Mr. Middlebrooks he got to have a bell for ev'y one of dem cows—a bell like ol' Betty's—for dey was down on deir knees an' prayin' for bells. Mr. Middlebrooks look at him hard an' say:

"'What crazy notion done hit you now, nigger? What does we want wid six more cowbells? One makes fuss enough, goodness knows!'

"'It ain't no crazy notion, Marse Waldron,' says Henry, 'cause I'm jus' fum de cowlot, an' ev'y one of dem cows was a prayin' fer a bell like Betty's, an' dey is got to have 'em if I has to sell my Sunday coat an' Monday britches to buy 'em! When po' dum' cows pray fer any little thing like a bell on Chrismus, dey sholy mus' git it.'

"Well, de upshot of de case was dat Mr. Middlebrooks' big heart landed him an' Henry at Mr. Berry's store 'bout de time he got de front do' open.

"When Mr. Berry hear 'bout dem bells an' de prayin' he laugh hissef 'mos' into a fit, but it didn't make no diffunce to Mr. Middlebrooks. He come along back with Henry, a-bringin' six new cowbells an' six new leather collars.

"When he got out at de front door, he says to Henry, says he, 'Henry, seein' as how it's too late to put de bells

an' collars in de cows' stockin's, the bes' thing you can do is to slip down to the lot an' hang 'em on their necks with a howdye for 'em all!" They do say that nigger fairly shouted, he was so proud.

"Erlong about breakfus, here come Henry up fum de lot, drivin' dem cows. All de white folks was on de front porch, just a-laughin'. Old Betty was in de lead, an' all de other cows strung out behin'! My, but dem bells sho did play a tune!"

"What tune did they play, Daddy Jesse?"

"Old Henry said it was de tune dey always sing in de church after de prayin' is all done, called de Sockdology—'praise God fum whom all blessings flow!'

"But all along the road the people would run out of de houses to see what was comin', an' de chillun thought it mus' be a circus.

"When dey got to de bend in de road whar ol' Miss Sykes' pastur' is—whar Mr. Middlebrooks kept his cows—Henry says de church bells broke out fer Chrismus an' de cows all stop to listen, an' ev'y las' one of 'em shook her head an' made her bell jine in de racket!" Daddy Jesse gave an imitation of a cow shaking her head, much to the Little Boy's delight.

"But nex' day," he continued, much pleased with himself, "ol' Miss Sykes come a-pitchin' down to tell Mr. Middlebrooks he must take dem bells off dem fool cows or take de cows out of her pastur', for dey almost run her crazy. Mr. Middlebrooks say he can't do dat, for it would break old Henry's heart.

"Miss Sykes up an' say then, 'If dat's de case, why not hang 'em all on Henry?' Dis sorter got Mr. Middlebrooks'

blood up, an' he called Henry an' all de hands together an' took a piece of his own lan' down by the swamp whar there was water an' cool, dark shade, an' whar de grass was long an' green, an' dey run a fence aroun' it fer de cows.

"An' that's what come of de cows prayin' on dat Chrismus mornin'. Henry says de good Lord give 'em more dan dey axed for."

"But Daddy Jesse, did you ever see the cows pray?"

"To be sho I is! De ve'y nex' Chrismus I went down to our cowlot, an' thar was old Sookey down on her knees an' her mouth a-workin'!"

"Was she praying for a bell, too, Daddy Jesse?"

"I dunno! I dunno! She'd look up firs' a' de sky an' den over towards de canebrake. I reck'n she was prayin' fer some of dat cane what stays green all de winter.

"When I told yo' ma 'bout it she made me take old Sookey over thar an' tie her whar she could git some of it.

"You wait tell nex' Chrismus, an' go down to de lot an' see fer yo'sef! If you go soon enough you'll see old Sookey down on her knees an' mos' gen'ly a-facin' de sunrise."

"But, Daddy Jesse, is it all down in the books about the cows praying?"

"Honey, I don't know an' I don't care! Thar's a heap to learn besides what's in de books! Somewhar in de Good Book a verse says, 'De Lord am my shepherd, I shall not want! He leadeth me beside de still waters; He maketh me to lie down in green pastur's.' Now, a man, jus'

a ordnerry man, ain't got no use for still water an' a pastur'.

"Maybe de verse was a-talkin' for a dum' animal what can't talk for itself—Gimme dat strap! Now look whar yo' hands done lef' a print on de buckle! Git up an' go 'long back whar you come fum! I tol' you 'bout layin' yo' han's on dis here harness!"

And, still mumbling, Daddy Jesse got up and moved off towards the carriage house. But the Little Boy raced off to the cowlot.



